

THE
HISTORY
OF
CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL CHURCH
PRIOR TO
THE REFORMATION.

In Two Volumes.

VOL. II.

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HISTORY OF CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

CHAPTER XV.

SUGGESTIONS—STATE OF EUROPE—ST. LEO—PERSECUTIONS IN AFRICA—CLOVIS, HIS CONVERSION—ST. PATRICK, HIS LABOURS AND SUCCESSES—BRITISH CHURCH.

THE history of the Christian church, as it advances from the fourth century, becomes involved in partial obscurity, the dark shadows of the world casting their gloom upon some of the forms which we are most anxious to study in their proper bearing and outline. But still we must not allow this partial obscurity to discourage us in the contemplation of that which is more plainly displayed. Many are the characters which shine in such a radiant light of charity, that even the darkness of the middle ages cannot throw them into shade. Others again are so intimately connected with the events of the age in which they appear, that the truth of their history may be determined by the part which they seemed destined or constrained to take. And as with the characters in which we are most interested, when studying the progress of the church, so with the most important of the incidents which determined its position at this or that epoch.

While there is sufficient reason to account some things unworthy of credit, because of their evident inconsistency with what we know to be true, there is cause enough to believe others which, though improbable when viewed alone, become very credible in connexion with particular circumstances.

Bearing these general suggestions in mind, the reader of church history may guard himself against a cold and heartless scepticism, and yet be far from yielding his assent to the cumbersome traditions of a superstitious age. He may allow his heart to be warmed by the instances of noble piety and fervent devotion which will prove to him that Christ has never forsaken his church ; and yet he may question the truth of pretended miracles, and deplore the growth of observances injurious to evangelical simplicity.

Europe presented at the period of which we have now to speak a scene of perpetual strife. Strange as it may sound, this indicated the existence of a source of power, of health and blessings, of which the exhausted East could no longer boast. The vast hordes of barbarians who rushed from their forests, or their barren plains, with nothing to impel them but the wild spirit of war and adventure, bore in their hearts the vital principle of new nations. As first one, and then another, tribe settled down upon some conquered tract of country, the two great characteristics of a mighty people were soon displayed : there was strength of arm to till the soil, and there was courage to defend it when cultivated. None of the worn-out polities of the old world could resist the growth of nations thus planted ; and by whatever name known, as Vandals, Goths, or Visi-goths, the advance of the barbarians was the grandest of revolutions which history has ever recorded.

But it was during the progress of this wonderful change, of this rejuveniscence of civilization, and while all the elements of social life were in a state of ferment, that the church had to assert its claims, and to develop its innermost principles, and take the form which seemed proper to its office and destiny. Many of the peculiar appearances which Christendom presented at this period may be accounted for by such considerations.* They warn us against the habit of judging the past by the present; of determining the worth of characters, or the sincerity of professions, by rules rigidly drawn from habits of reasoning formed under circumstances altogether different.

The actual state of the church can hardly better be shown, than by the history and character of the eminent men who took the most prominent part in its government. They were generally raised to their exalted position by the tide of popular opinion: and their elevation indicated, therefore, the ruling principles of the period. Their favourite ideas, again, acted with new force on the tendencies of the church and its doctrines; and hence in knowing them, we have the safest of all guides to the knowledge of their age, and its religious character. Such was the case with Chrysostom; with Ambrose and Augustine. St. Leo, who governed the church of Rome during a period of awful peril and turbulence, had not the intellectual power or literary genius of these wonderful men. But he must have possessed talents of a high order, to influence, as he did, the decision of councils; to awe the proudest of princes; and even to persuade a barbarian conqueror to stop half-way in his triumphant progress. Attila was already within a few days' march of Rome. The terrified emperor had

prepared for flight ; and the boldest of the citizens felt their courage fail at the mention of Attila's name. Leo sought the camp of the invader. He stood before him unterrified either by his savage countenance, or by the name of his fierce deeds. The barbarian honoured the sanctity of the venerable ambassador ; listened to his wishes ; and giving the command to his army, returned at once to the north, and passed the Danube.

When Genseric, king of the Vandals, some few years after appeared before the gates of Rome, St. Leo again saved the city from destruction ; it being by his entreaties alone that Genseric was induced to content himself with the pillage, instead of the burning, of the city.

Though far from occupying a place among ecclesiastical writers like that of the great fathers of the church, St. Leo has been lauded for the beauty, and occasional grandeur, of his style. His works, if those published under his name be genuine, consist of ninety-six sermons, and a hundred and forty-one letters. He enjoys the distinction of having been the first of the popes whose writings were collected into a volume ; but their value mainly depends upon the information which they convey on the great ecclesiastical topics of the day. St. Leo exercised an unquestioned influence in determining the numberless controversies daily arising respecting discipline and ceremonies. His personal virtues secured him a species of reverence which would never have been granted to his mere rank or office ; and when he died, he left the pontificate advanced in solid power, not so much from his direct effort to increase it, as from the collateral influence of his piety.

Before reverting to the progress of the church in Europe, we must notice the persecution endured by the orthodox believers at the hands of the Arians.

Huneric succeeded his father Genseric, on the Vandal throne in Africa, about the year 476. At the commencement of his reign, he exhibited some signs of a tolerant spirit; and the Catholics who had long groaned under the persecution of the Arians, so zealously supported by the Vandal princes, began again to assemble publicly in their churches. The emperor Zeno had married a sister of Huneric. This was an important circumstance in favour of the Catholics; and at the instance of the emperor and his consort, the Vandal king was induced to grant them the right of choosing another bishop, the see of Carthage having now been vacant twenty-four years. But the edict which announced the tolerant wishes of Huneric was heard with suspicion by the clergy of Carthage. "Our master," it was said, "accords you the privilege of electing a bishop, on condition that the bishops of our faith, now in Constantinople, and in the other provinces of the East, shall be allowed to preach in their churches, in such language as they please, and to exercise their religion, in the same manner as you have the liberty to perform the rites of yours in this, and in the other churches of Africa." The clergy sighed audibly on learning that such was the condition to which they must assent; and one and all exclaimed that it would be far better to leave the church of Carthage without a bishop, than to grant it one at so great a sacrifice. "Jesus Christ," they said, "will govern it as he has hitherto done."

But the protest of the clergy was disregarded. They were constrained to elect a prelate; and their choice fell upon Eugenius, a man of eminent piety and talents. The joy of the people was unbounded on again beholding a bishop on the throne rendered dear to their thoughts by the virtues of St. Cyprian. But their satisfaction was of a

more solid kind, when the charity of Eugenius shone forth in all its real worth and beauty; and when the force of his public discourses filled their minds with the noblest truths of religion.

The fame which the orthodox bishop of Carthage thus acquired tended greatly to lessen the influence of the Arian prelates. Their jealousy was excited; and they represented to the king, that, if Eugenius was permitted to continue in his present course, Arianism would be banished from the land. Alarmed for the fate of his cherished dogmas, Huneric took immediate measures to resist the supposed evil. His method of proceeding was in harmony with the spirit of a Vandal. In order to prevent the attendance of his own people on the ministrations of Eugenius, guards were posted at the door of the church in which he preached. When any Vandal, whose anxiety to know the truth induced him to seek the good bishop's instructions, passed under the porch, the guards struck him on the head with an instrument armed with hooks, and then dragged him by the hair into the street. Many women were subjected to this barbarous treatment; and as the zeal which inspired them seemed to increase with persecution, numerous were the instances of horrible mutilation almost daily presented in the public ways.

It was not long that Huneric remained satisfied with this mode of persecution. He now deprived all persons who held any public office of their rank and emoluments, if found guilty of professing the orthodox religion. The next step was to drive into banishment the greater part of the bishops and clergy, who could not be induced to compromise their faith. A large body of the principal laity were exposed to the same punishment; and near

five thousand persons were expelled from their homes, and lodged in different prisons, till preparations could be made for conveying them to the remoter deserts. The sufferings which they endured in the loathsome dungeons to which they were consigned appalled, but did not subdue, them. After a certain period, they were brought forth, and driven like cattle along the burning road. Many of them were worn out with sickness ; many were in extreme old age. This obtained them no pity. When any of them fell, the guards tied their legs together, and seizing the rope which bound them, dragged the sufferers along the ground. Those who reached the desert were left almost to perish with hunger. Venomous serpents of every description infested the district ; and the ordinary evils of banishment shrunk into nothing when compared with those endured by these victims of Vandal cruelty.

Shamed, and perhaps alarmed, by the reproaches which reached his ears, Huneric pretended to invite the orthodox bishops of Africa to a conference with his Arian prelates. In obedience to his summons, a number of venerable men assembled from all parts of the country, and even from the islands subject to the Vandal rule. Scarcely, however, had they arrived in Carthage, when the tyrant threw off his mask. Several of the bishops were seized on a false accusation of treason, or other crimes. They were put to death ; and one of the most learned of the number, whose erudition the Arians dreaded, perished in the flames.

When the conference was at length opened, the orthodox immediately discovered the absolute uselessness of attempting to defend themselves in such an assembly. Their most violent antagonist, Cyril, the Arian bishop of

Carthage, was appointed president of the meeting. The common forms and rules, necessary to preserve a just order in proceedings of this kind, were treated with contempt; and Eugenius and his party were compelled to content themselves with reading the confession of faith which they had prepared for the occasion.

A rude, fierce clamour followed the reading of this document. The Arians pretended that the orthodox had heaped insult upon them by assuming the title of Catholics; and when, as the result of their own turbulence, the assembly was broken up, they complained to the emperor, that Eugenius and his friends had prevented the continuance of the discussion.

Huneric had no wish to examine the truth of this accusation. Glad of the pretence which it afforded him, he sent orders to his officers throughout Africa, to close, on a certain day, all the churches not possessed by the Arian clergy. The wealth belonging to them was to be given to the latter: and the dispossessed ministers were to be punished as heretics.

This edict having been secretly dispatched, Huneric directed the bishops who were still in Carthage, to be driven beyond the walls of the city. The unfortunate prelates had no means left for pursuing their journey home. Neither horses nor attendants were allowed them; nor had they either money or food. Thus helpless they lingered about the walls and gates of the city, and in this condition they were found by Huneric, when riding out of the city one day, surrounded by his guards, he passed the spot which they had selected for their resting-place. Instead of listening to their appeals or remonstrances, he commanded his horsemen to ride in among them; and several of the most aged were instantly trampled down.

Before leaving the place, however, he directed them to appear in Carthage on a certain day, and in a particular building, when he would make them proposals which might lead to peace.

The bishops did not hesitate to appear as commanded. A paper was put into their hands, and they were desired to sign it. "On doing this," said the king's officers, "you shall be restored to your homes and your churches." "We are Christians and bishops," was the reply. "Can we give our assent to that, of the nature of which we are as yet ignorant?" "Swear then," said the officers, "that you desire that Hilderic, the king's son, may succeed to the throne on his father's death."

There was nothing apparently in this demand offensive to the conscience of an orthodox believer. Several, therefore, of the bishops considered that they should be purchasing the peace and safety of their churches at no expensive rate by signing the document before them. But the rest had a keener judgment, and a more scrupulous conscience. They accordingly objected to the proposed oath, and quoted the words of our Lord, "Swear not at all." On hearing this the officers said, "Let those who are willing to swear retire on one side." As each took his place, a notary wrote down his name and province; and when separate lists were made of those who would, and those who would not swear, one of the superior officers thus spoke, first addressing himself to those who had taken the oath:—"It has been declared by those of your own faith, that it is contrary to the gospel to swear. You have, therefore, committed a crime by what you have just done; and the king sentences you accordingly to perpetual slavery. You are also forbidden to sing, to pray, or to take a book in your hands to

read. Nor shall you ever administer orders, baptism, or penance." Then turning to the others, he said, "You have refused to swear, because you wish not the king's son to reign. You are, therefore, sentenced to banishment, and to be employed perpetually in cutting wood for the construction of ships."

Eugenius was not permitted to address his people again in the church. He, therefore, wrote them a far well epistle, exhorting every one to patience and resignation; to trust in God; and a firm devotion to the faith which they had been taught from his holy word. No fewer than four hundred and sixty-six bishops had attended the summons sent by Huneric through the several provinces of Africa. Of these, eighty-eight died; forty-six were banished to the island of Corsica; twenty-eight escaped; and the rest were sent as exiles into various parts of the country.

But it was not the bishops only who suffered in this dreadful persecution. The rest of the clergy were subjected to similar barbarities; and when they had been disposed of, their congregations were made partakers of the same sufferings. Huneric dispatched edicts and executioners from one end of Africa to another. None were to be spared who resisted the command concerning them to renounce the orthodox belief. Numberless were the victims who perished on this occasion. Many among them exhibited that peculiar heroism which sheds such a dazzling lustre over the records of early martyrdom. A noble testimony was thus rendered to the value of the creed which declares our blessed Lord to be of one essence with the Father. Thousands suffered death or exile rather than renounce this faith. They felt that to waver on this point would be to put in danger the

Gospel itself ; and they accordingly took the same part as their forerunners had taken when called upon to lay down their lives for confessing the name of Jesus.

Firm, however, as the greater number remained, amid all the terrors of persecution, many even of the bishops and clergy saved themselves by lapsing into Ariapism. The death of Himeric, and the accession of his nephew Gonabone, brought more tranquil days to the church of Africa. Eugenius and others were recalled from exile ; and the Roman pontiff undertook the important office of governing the persecuted church, now restored to tranquillity, against the hasty return of faithless and unworthy members into its communion. The clergy who had lapsed were to be kept in the class of penitents all their lives ; members of the monastic orders who had committed this offence, were to pass through several grades of penitence, occupying a period of twelve years, before obtaining absolution. Laymen were to undergo a probation answerable to the nature or circumstances of their offence ; but none were to be readmitted to church communion till they had given full proof of the sincerity of their penitence.

Whether the barbarous tribes of the north, still retaining the ancient heathenism, or devoted to some erroneous form of Christianity, established themselves, the church and its members were subjected to the terrors of persecution. But the fiercest of these enemies to God's people were sometimes converted into ardent champions of the gospel ; and in this way a striking and interesting proof was given of the truth of the saying, that, "all things work together for good to them that love God ; to them that are the called according to his purpose."

A. D. 496. Clovis, the prince of the Salian Franks, towards the close of the fifth century, was one of those remarkable men who appear raised up for the especial purpose of carrying into execution some great design of Providence. His vices prevent us from regarding him as a minister, but his courage and his success may teach us to view him as an instrument, of intended good. Violence and treachery marked with infamy the early part of his career. The dagger and the poisoned wine-cup were as familiar to his thoughts as the sword; and it seemed indifferent to him in what way he conquered, if he did but gain the victory. His ambitious projects were at length crowned with success. He became king of the Franks, and obtained as his consort the daughter of a prince of Burgundy. This excellent woman had been educated in the faith of the gospel, and it was her fervent hope that God might enable her to bring Clovis to embrace Christianity. On the birth of their first child, she obtained his consent to its being baptized. But the child soon died; and Clovis, with mingled grief and anger, imputed the loss to the anger of his gods. The birth of another son renewed the all-important question, whether he was to be presented before the heathen shrine, or baptized in the name of Jesus. Clotilda's persuasions, and the affection with which she had inspired her husband, prevailed. The child was baptized. It fell sick; and the fears of Clovis being renewed with ten-fold force, he heaped reproaches on his queen, as having sacrificed another of their offspring to her religion. But Clotilda ceased not to pray for the child's recovery. Her supplications were heard; and Clovis went with a glad heart to pursue the war which he had commenced against the Alemanni. Hitherto, an almost uninterrupted success had attended his arms. But he was

now to be threatened with a reverse ; having fallen in with the enemy near the village Tolbiacum, the present town of Zulpick, about twelve miles from Cologne, a hot engagement ensued, in which his army was on the point of being overwhelmed by the forces of the Alemanni. At this moment of peril, Clovis recollected what his wife had so often told him of the power of the true God, and of Christ. Obeying the impulse of his feelings, he prostrated himself upon the earth ; and praying for immediate help, vowed that he would not delay to become a Christian, if that help were accorded him. His supplications were heard. The tide of battle turned in his favour. Instead of beholding his army dispersed, or cut to pieces by the swords of the enemy, he gained a brilliant victory. This he at once ascribed to the true God. He does not appear to have vacillated a moment as to the course which he was now to pursue. Summoning the learned and pious Remigius, bishop of Rheims, to his aid, he listened patiently to the instructions which were to prepare him for baptism. Before the end of the year, he was admitted to that sacrament in the cathedral at Rheims. Three thousand of his people received the sacred rite at the same time ; and soon after the great body of the nation became converted to Christianity.

However suspicious some of the circumstances connected with such conversions may be, still they exhibit clearly the marks of divine power. Clovis was one of the most powerful princes of the age. His influence extended far and wide ; and he was laying the foundations of a mighty empire. Inconsistent, therefore, as many of his subsequent actions might be with the profession of a Christian, his readiness to assume the title of "Eldest Son of the Church," and "Most Christian King," promised well for

the visible church, and the furtherance of its general interests. About ten years after his conversion he assailed the formidable Alaric, and slew him with his own hand in battle. A wider career of conquests now seemed opened to him; but he was effectually opposed by Theodoric, and died in the year 511. The strange mingling of his old warlike thoughts with his Christian feelings is strikingly illustrated by the curious anecdote told of him in the ancient chronicles. On hearing one day the venerable Bishop Remigius describe in his sermon the sufferings of our Lord, and the insults heaped upon his innocent head by the Roman soldiers and others, he struck his hand on his sword, and half drawing it from the scabbard, exclaimed, "That should not have occurred, had I been there with my Franks." We may learn from this story somewhat of the eloquence of the good bishop, and of the susceptible character of Clovis.

But while the extent of the visible church was rapidly increased by conversions like that of Clovis and his subjects, agents were at work in spreading the gospel, whose motives for promoting its interests were derived from a source far more legitimate, or of a far less questionable nature.

Among the missionaries of ancient times none, it is probable, accomplished more, or with a purer or more earnest spirit, than the celebrated Patricius, or St. Patrick. This remarkable man was born in the little town of Kirkpatrick, between Dumbarton and Glasgow.* His father held the rank of deacon in the church; and he received an education which early imbued him with the love of

* At that time within the boundaries of Britain. Hence St. Patrick was of British not Scottish origin. His proper name was Succat.—Usher: Britan. Eccles. Antiquitates, cap. xvii. p. 427.

learning. No strong sentiment of religion seems to have influenced his thoughts at this period; but a strange event threw him upon the resources of his own mind; and the best principles of his early education then began to produce their fruit. The British coast was infested with pirates. On one of their descents upon the shore, they seized Patricius,* with several of his countrymen, and conveyed the captives, on board ship, to the north of Ireland. Patricius was then sixteen years old; and having been bought by one of the great men of the country, was sent into the fields to tend the flocks. There spending his days in solitude, and left to his own reflections, he meditated upon the causes which had reduced him, and so many of his countrymen, to a state of bondage. "God," he says, "opened my eyes, and revealed to me the wickedness of my unbelief. He brought me to lament my sins, and to turn to him with my whole heart. Pitying my youth and my ignorance, and beholding my humility, He protected me before I knew Him, or could distinguish between good and evil; and guarded me, and comforted me, even as a father his son."†

In this employment Patrick spent about six years. Every day he exercised himself frequently in prayer. The love of God increased more and more in his heart. Faith in him, and fear of his holy name, were equally enlarged, and the blessing of the Lord was evidently* with him. "Thus," says his biographer, "feeling how kind the Lord was, freely and more freely did he pour forth the incense of his supplications in the presence of the Most High; and an hundred times in the day, and an hundred times

* Also called Colum-Kille.—Religion Professed by the Antient Irish, p. 2.

† The Confession of St. Patrick. Ap. Usher. p. 431.

in the night, did he on his bended knees adore his Creator ; and often did he pray for a long time fasting, and nourishing himself with the roots of herbs, and with the slightest food, did he mortify his members, which were stretched upon the earth. Nor heat, nor cold, nor snow, nor hail, nor ice, nor any other inclemency of the air, could force him to remit his spiritual exercises. Hence he went forward, daily increasing and confirming himself in the faith and love of Christ Jesus ; and the more weak and infirm he appeared, so much the steadier and more powerful was he in fulfilling the commands of the Lord." *

When entering on the seventh year of his bondage, he was delivered by some remarkable interposition of Divine Providence. Finding a ship ready to sail for Britain, he took his passage ; and after three days arrived on his native shores. The part of the country where he landed was wild and uninhabited. A portion of the crew and passengers accompanied him ; and after walking for some days they were in danger of perishing from hunger. Hitherto, the youthful saint had in vain exhorted them to repent and believe in God. Fear and want now somewhat softened their hearts, and turning to him, they said, "See, thou worshipper of Christ, how wretched we are with want and misery, and our eyes fail us for very need. Now, therefore, implore thy God for us, even that God whom thou describest and exaltest as all-powerful, that he may relieve us by his Bounty, and we will adore and glorify his greatness." St. Patrick replied, "Believe in, and confess, the God who giveth food unto all flesh, and by whom, when he openeth his hand, ye shall be satisfied from his goodness." The chronicler adds, that having

* Life and Acts of St. Patrick, from Jocelin, c. xiii.

thus spoken, the saint earnestly addressed himself to Heaven, and that soon after a herd of swine appeared, and wild honey was discovered, so that the famishing travellers were delivered from the danger of perishing with hunger.

After undergoing many sufferings, and narrowly escaping captivity even in his own land, St. Patrick at length reached the home of his parents. Their joy was unbounded at recovering their long-lost son. His affectionate care for their old age ; his wonderful growth in piety and wisdom, filled them with delight. But it was not long they were to enjoy his society. During his bondage in Ireland he had learned the language of the country, and conversed with the people. Their ignorance of divine things grieved him to the heart. He burned with a holy desire to impart to them the knowledge of the Scriptures ; he prayed to be made an instrument in the hands of God for bringing them to Christ.

Different minds will view the circumstances under which men like St. Patrick are placed in a different light. Some will readily ascribe the inward call which he obeyed to divine power ; others will explain away the appearance of what is supernatural by referring to the state of his mind, and the habitual tendency of his thoughts. At all events, we find that he regarded it as his bounden duty to prepare himself for undertaking the conversion of the Irish. There is, on the other hand, a very important fact to prove, that, however ardent his devotion, he was neither the subject of a fanatical imagination, nor a vain pretender to spiritual endowments which would raise him above the necessity of employing ordinary means to accomplish his purpose. Though glowing with the hope of one day becoming the apostle of Ireland,

he felt the necessity of a long and diligent preparation for so weighty an undertaking. Instead, therefore, of proceeding at once to the desired scene of his labours, he travelled to France,* and there put himself under the instruction of the most learned of the bishops. From France he journeyed into Italy, and thence visited the several islands of the Mediterranean, accumulating as he went a vast store of knowledge, gathered from the lips of the most experienced Christian teachers.

Several years having been employed in this manner, St. Patrick proceeded to Rome, in order to obtain a legitimate appointment as missionary to the Irish.† Celestine was the then pontiff. Anxious respecting the state of Ireland, he had already sent his archdeacon, Palladius, to attempt its conversion. Nothing was neglected, it seems, to aid Palladius in his labours; but they were unattended by success. The Irish rudely repelled him from their houses, and refused to listen to his teaching or exhortations. St. Patrick seemed endowed with qualities better calculated to accomplish the desired end. The pontiff, therefore, on being assured of the death of Palladius, consented to his wish; and, consecrating him bishop, sent him, with full powers, to exercise his functions among the fierce and benighted inhabitants of the distant island.‡

* Speaking of this journey, in his Confessions, he says, "*Timorem Dei habui ducem itineris mei per Gallias atque Italianam etiam in insulis quæ sunt in Mari Tyrrhæno.*"

† This is the popular or traditional account; but it is seriously questioned whether St. Patrick did not owe the whole of his ecclesiastical dignity to the British, rather than the Romish church.

‡ Celestine also at this time gave St. Patrick the Latin name, Patricius. Britan. Eccles. Antiquitates. c. xvii. p. 438.

The new missionary had twenty companions appointed him, and the party, having prosperously pursued their journey, landed at length on the coast of Cornwall. There, it appears, he lingered for some time, preaching the gospel, and making strenuous efforts firmly to plant the church of Christ in that remote part of Britain.

But this was not the primary object of his calling; and being warned either by a dream, a vision of angels, or his own feelings and convictions of duty, he bade an unwilling farewell to the present scene of his labours, and crossed the sea to Ireland. The place where he first landed afforded little encouragement to his zeal. He was fiercely repelled by the people; denied the common rites of hospitality; and threatened with violence. After wandering from province to province, he reached a part of the country where he resolved to put forth the whole strength of his spiritual endowments. Leogaire was, at that time, the most powerful of the Irish princes. He violently opposed the saint; but in vain. The traditions which Jocelin has handed down to us are full of wild and fanciful extravagances; but among them are some which give fair reasons to believe that the personal holiness, and fervent eloquence, of this early missionary, wrought miracles of a far nobler character than those which a too credulous admiration would attribute to his sanctity. There is a good deal of poetry and beauty in these accounts. Thus, Leogaire is said to have had "two daughters, like roses growing in a rose-bed. The one was of a ruddy complexion, and she was called Ethue; and the other was fair, and she was called Fedella." They had been educated in all the superstition and idolatry of the age. Early one morning, the sun just rising, they went to wash in a clear fountain, on the margin of which they

found the saint sitting with other holy men, his companions. Regarding his countenance and garb, they were struck with wonder, and inquired of his birth and residence, almost taking him for an apparition. But the saint admonished them rather to believe in his God, than to inquire of his descent, or his dwelling-place. Then the damsels desiring to know somewhat of the God of whom he spoke, earnestly questioned him respecting his power, his riches, and glory. In compliance with this wish, the saint instructed them in the main points of the Christian faith; affirming God to be the Creator and Ruler of the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is therein; showing also that he has one Son, coeternal, coeval, and of the same essence, with himself; everywhere reigning, governing all things, possessing all things. He then assured the damsels, listening attentively to his words, that they should exchange an earthly and transitory kingdom for a heavenly and eternal kingdom; for that if they obeyed his counsel, they should unite with the Celestial King in pure and indissoluble union. And when he had thus preached unto them with persuasive eloquence, the damsels believed in Christ, and he baptized them even in that fountain. Almost immediately after their baptism they received the Eucharist. This their conversion was followed by an early death. "Falling asleep in the Lord, they quitted their earthly tabernacles, and went unto their heavenly spouse. And their friends and their kindred gathered together and bewailed them for three days, as was the custom of the country; and returned their sacred remains unto the womb of the mother of all human kind." It is added that a church, now belonging to the metropolitan see of Armagh, was erected over their grave; and that the idolatrous priests by

whom they had been educated, reproaching St. Patrick as the cause of their death, afforded another instance of the power of his words; for that, "Touching the harp of David, and preaching unto them the kingdom of God, he converted them unto the faith, and they were baptized."*

We may also discover, in some of these old traditions, proofs of the skilful manner in which St. Patrick adapted Scripture lessons to the capacity of his rude auditors. It was the popular belief, that he had the power of seeing the souls of the good and of the wicked departing at the hour of death to their respective abodes in the worlds beyond the grave. Thus: "There was a man who had a great name, according as names in this world are accounted great; and he had flocks of sheep, and herds of oxen, and his possessions increased on the earth. And this man died; and a long assembly of his children and his kindred celebrated his obsequies with much pomp and honour according to the estimation of men, and so committed him unto the common mother. And they who account the man blessed unto whom these things are given, declared him happy, whose life was so fortunate, and whose death so honourable; and they thought that he had greatly pleased the Lord. But the other man was a beggar, who having lived all his life in wretchedness and poverty, went the way of all flesh. And his body lay a long time without the funeral rites, unburied, and mangled by the birds of prey. At length it was dragged into a pit-hole, and covered with turf. And they who judge according to outward shows, esteemed this man most miserable and unfortunate. But the saint pronounced the opinion of men to be contrary to the

* Jocelin, chap. lviii.

righteousness of Him who searcheth the reins and the heart ; whose judgments are a great deep. And he declared that he saw the soul of the rich man plunged by the demons into hell ; while the spirit of the poor man, whose life was accounted as foolishness, and his end without honour, was reckoned among the children of God, and his lot of blessedness was among the saints. Truly, he said, the sons of men are vain, and their judgments are false in the weight ; but the just God loveth justice, and his countenance beholdeth righteousness ; and in the balance of his righteousness weigheth he the pleasures and the riches of this evil man, and the sins of this poor man, haply whereby he hath merited the wrath, and the misfortunes which he bore. And the one from his honour and his glory he adjudged unto present torment ; and the other, who had suffered in the furnace of poverty and affliction, he mercifully sent unto the joys of heaven.”*

The labours of St. Patrick were evidently blessed with success. His devotion was of that character which religious feeling is so often found to assume in those who are called to execute some great work. The life which he led was one of intense toil ; but he set an example of the most careful practice of private prayer and study. It is said that he went through the whole of the Psalms every day ; reading, besides, other sacred compositions, and the book of Revelation. His freedom from selfishness, and his profound humility, are equally shown in the statements respecting his disposition, and general mode of life. Till the fifty-fifth year of his age, it is said, when he was appointed Bishop of Ireland, he always travelled on foot. Owing to the difficulty of making the circuit of his exten-

* Jocelin, chap. clxxxi.

sive diocese in this primitive and apostolical manner of travelling, he now consented to use a chariot. He wore a simple white cowl over his other garments, setting an example to his brethren to be contented with the plain habit which the wool of the sheep afforded them, untinged with any foreign dye. And he kept, it is added, his hands free from any gift, ever accounting it more blessed to give than to receive. Hence whenever any rich man presented him with ought, he hastened to dispense it among the poor, lightening himself thereof as of a heavy burthen. In his countenance, in his speech, in his gait, in his whole appearance did he edify the beholders. His discourse was in harmony with his outward bearing. It suited every age, sex, and condition. He was thoroughly skilled in four languages, the British, the Hibernian, the Gallic, and the Latin; possessing also a moderate acquaintance with Greek. So it is also said; that when he was asked to explain any profound question or difficult case, he would always answer, "I know not: God knoweth:" but that when great necessity compelled him to certify the word of his mouth, he always confirmed it by attesting his Judge. Thus, though in his manifold virtues he equalled, or excelled other saints, he excelled even himself in the virtue of humility. He spoke of himself in his epistles as the lowest, the poorest, the most wretched of all sinners. Being small of stature he called himself a dwarf; but he frequently, after the example of Saint Paul, exerted his strength in manual labour—in fishing; tilling the ground, or aiding in the building of churches. None of these occupations, however, diverted him from his main object—the conversion of Ireland, and the establishment of such a system of instruction and government as might preserve the people from falling back into idolatry.

Knowing the importance of supplying them with a sufficient number of authorized teachers, he is said to have appointed three hundred and fifty bishops, five thousand presbyters, and a proportionable number of inferior orders, to superintend this great charge. He lived to extreme old age; but some years before his death, he retired into comparative solitude, employing what time and strength were left him in prayer, reading, and contemplation.

Both history and tradition bear testimony to the blessing attending St. Patrick's missionary labours. The doctrines which he taught appear to have been drawn from the pure fountain of Scripture; and for some generations after the period when he lived, the apostolical character of the creed and institutions which he gave to the Irish might be easily and clearly traced. Thus, Archbishop Usher, in speaking of the study of the Scriptures, says, "The practice of our ancestors herein was not different from their judgment. For as Bede, touching the latter, recordeth of the successor of Colum-Kille, the great saint of our country, that they observed only those works of piety and chastity which they could learn in the prophetical, evangelical, and apostolic writings; so, for the former, he specially noteth one of the principal of them, Bishop Aidan, that, all such as went in his company, whether they were of the clergy or of the laity, were bound to exercise themselves, either in the reading of Scriptures, or in the learning of psalms." * And: "As by us now, so by our forefathers then, the continual meditation of the Scriptures was held to give special vigour and vegetation to the soul, as we read in the book attributed unto St. Patrick, 'Of the

Abuses of the World; and the holy documents delivered therein were esteemed by Christians as their chief riches, according to that of Columbanus : ‘ To thee be the riches, the precepts of the heavenly law.’ * In which heavenly riches our ancient Scottish and Irish did thrive so well, that many worthy personages in foreign parts were content to undergo a voluntary exile from their own country, that they might freely traffic here for so excellent a commodity.” To the continued reverence for Scripture, both in Britain and Ireland, from the times here spoken of, is attributed King Alfred’s knowledge of divine things, and his noble character as, “ a man most learned in the Scriptures.” So also : “ When we read of Furseus, in the writings of Bedé, and, in another ancient author, of Killarus, that, ‘ from the time of their very childhood, they sought to learn the Holy Scriptures,’ it may be easily collected, that in those days it was not thought a thing unfit for even children to give themselves to the study of the Bible. ‘ Wherein,’ it is added, ‘ how greatly some did profit in those tender years, may appear by that which Boniface, the first Archbishop of Mentz, relates of Livinus, who was trained up in his youth by Benignus in the singing of David’s Psalms, and the reading of the holy Gospels, and other divine exercises. And Jonas of Columbanus, in whose breast the treasures of the Holy Scriptures were so laid up, that within the compass of his youthful years, he set forth an elegant exposition of the book of the Psalms.’ By the industry of this holy man, the study of God’s word was so propagated, that in the monasteries which were founded according to his rule, not the men only, but the religious women also carefully attended to the same study,

* *Sint tibi divitiæ, divine dogmata legis.*

that 'through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, they might have hope.' *

These are striking testimonies to the care which St. Patrick must have used, in conformity with the example of earlier missionaries, to establish the doctrine according to the pure word of God. Had this not been his constant endeavour, it can hardly be supposed that the study of the Bible would afterwards have become so general in the Irish church. Were there no other evidence, therefore, of the wisdom and piety of this celebrated man, this, his reverence for Scripture, would be sufficient to secure for him a large share of admiration. We may discover in this, the secret of his success; and know, in the same manner, how to account for the fact, that for a considerable period, there were men among the clergy of Ireland, whose profound knowledge of divine things was such as to draw to their schools and monasteries students of theology from the most distant countries.

The degree of connexion which existed between the Irish church as established by St. Patrick, and the see of Rome, has been matter of frequent controversy. Archbishop Usher quotes the following sentences from some old authors; but expresses a doubt as to what degree of credit they deserve. "If any questions do arise in this island, let them be referred to the see apostolic." And: "Whosoever any cause which is very difficult, and unknown unto all the judges of the Scottish nations, shall arise, it is rightly to be referred to the see of the Archbishop of the Irish, (to wit, Patrick,) and to the examination of the prelate thereof. But if then, by him and his wise men, a cause of this nature cannot easily be made up, we have

* Usher. Of the Religion professed by the Ancient Irish, chap. i

decreed it shall be sent to the see apostolic ; that is, to say, to the chair of the Apostle Peter, which hath the authority of the city of Rome."

On these statements the venerable Usher observes : " Only this I will say, that as it is most likely St. Patrick had a special regard unto the church of Rome, from whence he was sent for the conversion of this island ; so, if I myself had lived in his days, for the resolution of a doubtful question, I should as willingly have listened to the judgment of the church of Rome, as to the determination of any church in the whole world, so reverend an estimation have I of the integrity of that church, as it stood in those good former days. But that St. Patrick was of opinion, that the church of Rome was sure ever afterward to continue in that good estate ; and that there was a perpetual privilege annexed unto that see, that it should never err in judgment ; or that the pope's sentences were always to be held as infallible oracles, that will I never believe. Sure I am that my countrymen after him were of a far other belief, who were so far from submitting themselves in this sort to whatsoever should proceed from the see of Rome, that they afterwards stood out against it, when they had little cause so to do."*

A very curious collection of writings, known under the title of The Book of Armagh, contains, besides a Life of St. Patrick, and other papers, the *Confession* which he is said to have written, and addressed as an epistle to the Irish ; and an ancient version of the four Gospels. " In these documents," says Sir William Betham, " appears the pure apostolic Christian minister ; the humble devout missionary, anxious to promote the salvation of his fellow-

* Of the Religion of the Ancient Irish, chap. iii.

men ; imbued indeed with great zeal, and relating facts which he attributes to the intervention of 'a *particular providence*, but which, on examination, are to be accounted for by natural causes. It is not necessary, however, to defend our saint for believing in a particular providence, and the intervention of that superintending power, even in common cases, much less when the important object was the conversion of a nation. Nor can there be any imputation against him for credulity or fanaticism, for believing one of the most important truths of Christianity. No. Patrick's writings rescue his character from an unmerited stigma : he lived in a pure age ; preached a pure faith, and was worthy to be ranked with those truly pious and exemplary characters, the earliest fathers of the Christian church—the successors of the apostles. Both documents (the Confession, and a Letter to Coroticus) are eloquent, and breathe a truly Christian spirit of humility, of piety, and devotedness to the will of God ; and, as Dimma says, such an anxiety for the sanctification of souls, and so much love for truth, as to convince us of his inflexible integrity, and to fix him in the first place of our affectionate regard." *

In the "Confession" here referred to, St. Patrick gives an account of the first impressions made upon his mind, by the mysterious call which he received to preach among the benighted Irish. "God be praised," he says, "that after so many years the Lord performed to them according to their entreaty. And on another night, I know not, God knows, whether in me, or beside me, with words very skilful, which I heard, but could not understand, unless at the latter part of the discourse, he thus spoke : 'He

* Irish Antiquarian Researches, part ii. p. 270.

who gave thee life ; the same is before thee, and speaks in thee.' And I then awoke joyfully. And again I perceived him praying in me ; and he was as if within my very frame. And I heard, that is, over the interior man, and there he strongly prayed with groans. And in the midst of this, I was astonished, and wondered, and reflected, who it could be that prayed within me. But at the end of the prayer he thus spoke—it may be the Spirit. And I then rose, and remembered the apostle saying, 'The Spirit assists the weakness of our prayers : for we know not what to ask for as we ought ; but the Spirit himself prays for us with groans not to be uttered ;' which cannot be expressed in words :—and again, 'The Lord our intercessor prays for us.'"

Having spoken of the numerous dangers from which he had been delivered by Divine Providence, he continues ; "Because I am very greatly indebted to God, who showed me so much favour, that many people were born again to God through me, and that the clergy everywhere should be ordained for this people, lately coming to the faith ; for the Lord took them (or me) from the extremity of the earth, as he formerly promised through the prophets."

And further : "It, therefore, behoves us to fish well, and diligently, as the Lord advises and teaches, saying, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' And again, 'Lo ! I send forth fishers and many hunters, saith the Lord.' Wherefore it very much behoves us to spread our net, so that a numerous multitude and crowd should be taken for the Lord, and that there should everywhere be clergy, who should baptize and exhort the poor and needy, as the Lord in the gospel enjoins and teaches, saying, 'Proceeding now, therefore, teach all nations,' &c. Whence is it that in Ireland those who never had the

knowledge of a God, but worshipped even filthy idols,—how have they lately become the Lord's people, and are called the sons of God ?”

Again: “Behold, I call God to witness against my soul, that I have not lied, neither had I any occasion, to do so to you. Nor do I expect honour from any of you ; for that honour is sufficient for me, which He promised who does not lie. But I see that I am now in this present time exalted beyond measure by the Lord. And I was not worthy, nor such as that He should accomplish this for me ; whilst I know that poverty and misfortune are much better for me than riches and pleasures ; for even the Lord Christ for our sakes became poor. But I should be wretched and unhappy even to wish for wealth. Now I have it not ; nor do I judge myself because I daily condemn the risk of being either massacred, or intrapped, or reduced to slavery, or subjected to want. But I pray for those who believe and fear God ; and for whoever shall be worthy to read or receive this writing, which Patrick, the sinner, wrote in Ireland.” *

Coroticus' is supposed to have been one of the Welsh princes engaged in the petty, but cruel, wars of these times. St. Patrick viewed the events which were daily occurring, with the grief of a tender and Christian spirit. His bold reproof of the tyrants and warriors, among the Picts and Scots, is of the same kind as those which were often levelled by the bishops in other countries against mightier and more renowned warriors. It is thus the saint addresses the barbarian prince :—

“Patrick, a rude and unlearned sinner, having been appointed a bishop in Ireland, declare that I have re-

* Book of Armagh. Irish Antiquarian Researches, part ii. p. 427—432.

ceived that mission from God, who is my witness, that, dwelling among barbarians, a Christian and an exile, urged by my love and zeal for God, and the truth of Christ, I wished, although rudely, and in an unpolished manner, to declare these things from my mouth.* For the love of my neighbours, and my children in the Lord, roused me, and compelled me to give up my country and parents, and even my life also. if I should be thought worthy. I have written with my own hand these words to Coroticus, to be delivered to him by the soldiers. Although I am despised by those to whom I have written, I do not say this in respect to my fellow-citizens, or the pious Roman citizens, but in regard to the citizens of devils; apostates; who, on account of their evil works and hostile acts, in the works of death, are fit companions of the apostate *Scots* and *Picts*, sanguinary men, who have been ever ready to shed the blood of the innocent Christians, whom in numbers I brought to God; and confirmed to Christ."

He then mentions that several people had been cruelly butchered the very day after their baptism, and thus denounces those through whom they were exposed to this calamity. "Wherefore, let every man who fears God know that they are estranged from me, and from my Lord Christ, on whose mission I am now employed; and that they are patricides ravenous wolves, devouring the

* The account which he gives of himself in another passage of this epistle, throws some doubt upon the correctness of the commonly received statement, that his father was a deacon. He here says, "I was of the patrician order, according to the flesh, my father being a *Decurion*. The contradiction has probably arisen from the imperfect way in which the word *Decurion* or *Diaconus* was originally written.

Lord's people like bread. Ireland has been mercifully and benignly planted and instructed under the favour of God. . . I do not usurp anything ; I have a part with those whom he has called and pre-ordained to preach his gospel, under no small persecutions, to the furthest limits of the earth. *The enemy has acted insidiously towards me through the tyranny of Coroticus, who fears not God. Wherefore, I beseech you, let none of you who are saints and humble in heart, suffer yourselves to be flattered by such persons ; nor take meat or drink with them, nor receive alms from them, until they atone to God for the tears which they have cruelly caused to be shed by us ; and shall liberate the servants of God, and the baptized hand-maidens of Christ, for whom he was crucified and died."

And in conclusion : "I earnestly beseech you, whichever of you be a servant of God, that he be ready to bear this letter ; that he be drawn away by no one, but that rather he should read it in the presence of all the people, and before Coroticus himself ; that, if God inspires them, they may repent and turn to the Lord, and deserve from Him to live, and be made whole here and for ever."*

The spirit which dictated this bold appeal could not but greatly aid the cause of religion and humanity. It convinced the enemy that, amidst all his successes, there was an arm mightier than his own ; and that it was perilous to provoke the wrath of God by the persecution of his people.

The state of the British church at this period, presents a melancholy contrast to that of the church in Ireland, invigorated and directed by the labours of St. Patrick.

* Irish Antiquarian Researches, part ii. p. 433.

Pelagius had early succeeded in unsettling the minds of the people on some main points of faith. The influence which St. Augustine exercised in other provinces was but little felt among the simple inhabitants of this remote island. Hence heresy wrought its worst ; and the state of the country generally favoured the diffusion, not merely of doctrinal error, but of vice and corruption. Some of the British clergy were men of ability, and undoubted piety. Among these was Fastidius, who was bishop, it is said, of London. He is described as deeply conversant with the Scripture, and as a very powerful preacher. St. Ninian was another of these learned British divines. His efforts were blessed in the conversion of the Southern Picts, and the church which he established long preserved the knowledge of the gospel along the northern border of England.

But all the exertions of these able and pious men were insufficient to stem the stream of error, or to avert the evils daily coming upon the church. Feeling their danger and their helplessness, the clergy who were still faithful to the truth, resolved to seek the aid of their brethren in Gaul. The two most celebrated men at that time in the Gallican church were Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, bishop of Troy. To them the British clergy applied in this season of trouble. Their desire was readily granted ; and the aged Germanus, with Lupus for his companion, immediately set sail for Britain. The venerable Bede has described their voyage with eloquent simplicity. It was prosperous enough, he says, till they were half way over the channel, "when suddenly the powers of darkness, who envied their enterprise and feared their success," covered the sky with darkness, and raised a violent storm. The force of the tempest tore

the rigging in pieces, and mocked the efforts of the mariners, so that the ship, becoming unmanageable, was driven at random, without any direction from the helm. Amidst all this danger, Germanus, weary with his voyage, or from over-watching, lay fast asleep. But the tempest becoming more furious, and the wind blowing so hard that the ship was under water, Lupus and the other passengers awakened the holy old man. The courage of Germanus rose in proportion to the danger. Having addressed our Saviour ; and performed a species of ablution in the name of the blessed Trinity, he exhorted his fellow bishop, and the other persons on board the ship, to join him in prayer. This was done, and soon relief was sent from heaven. The prince of the powers of the air retired ; the rage of the tempest fell ; the air grew bright ; the sea became calm ; and the wind changing, and blowing gently astern, they were quickly carried to the British shore.*

A vast number of people, it is said, were assembled on the beach to receive the Gallic prelates. Their fame had long preceded them ; and the veneration manifested for their opinion proved how wisely the British clergy had acted in inviting them to their assistance. "And now," says Bede, "these apostolical bishops filled the island with their fame, their preaching, and their miracles. They omitted no opportunity of instructing and recovering the Britons ; preaching not only in the churches, but sometimes in the fields and highways ; and thus the orthodox were confirmed, and those who had been misled, were taught to acknowledge their error."

* "Adest divinitas: fugantur inimici; tranquillitas serena subsequitur; venti è contrario ad itineris ministeria revertuntur, decursisque brevi spatiis pelagi, optati literis quiete potiuntur." Cap. 17.

But this success was not achieved without difficulty. At first, the heads of the Pelagian party in Britain took no public notice of their proceedings.* They soon discovered that if they remained thus passive, the ruin of their cause must inevitably follow.* A conference, therefore, was determined on. To this meeting they came with a great display of pomp, and with numerous attendants. The contending parties, says the old historian, were very different in temper, figure, and adornment. One side relied upon the Divine aid; the other presumed on their own abilities: piety distinguished the one, pride the other party. Christ was for this side; Pelagius for that. The Gallic bishops gave their adversaries leave to argue first. Their arguments, it seems, had little weight; but when Germanus and his companion replied, they exhibited a noble command, not merely of rhetoric, but of reason and Scriptural erudition. The popular voice, as well as that of the more learned of the clergy, quickly pronounced in favour of Germanus and Lupus. For the time, Pelagianism was baffled and humbled. The British church again held up its head; and hopes were entertained by the most pious of its members, that the bright beams of the gospel might again shine upon it, undimmed by the clouds of heresy.

These hopes might have been fulfilled, had not the small, but devout and energetic party which struggled so boldly for the truth, found itself overpowered by the growing disorders of the nation. The perpetual incursions of the Picts and Scots; and soon after, the more formidable influx of the Saxons, threw the whole country into a state of confusion, in which religion almost ceased to be remembered. No timely repentance moved the people to seek Divine help. "Neither the

present judgment," it is said by Gildas, alluding to a terrible pestilence, "nor the prospect of another at hand, was sufficient to bring them to a reformation. They continued incorrigible; and went the old lengths in licentiousness and disorder. And when God called to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, behold! joy and gladness; slaying oxen, and killing sheep: eating flesh and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."

Had the British Christians remained faithful to their early profession of the gospel, terrible as might have been their temporal condition at this period, their church would still have continued to exist, and bear testimony with no uncertain voice, to the purity of its ancient doctrine. But the vices which now prevailed brought down judgments upon the church itself. The dark clouds of Divine displeasure were permitted to obscure the brightness of its primitive beauty; and when it again rose from its low estate, and was seen rearing its head among its sister churches, the world deemed it had a right to question its origin, and to doubt its claims to antiquity or independence.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONTINUED INFLUENCE OF HERETICAL SYSTEMS—LABOURS OF GELASIUS—THEODORIC AND SYMMACHUS—THE EMPEROR ANASTASIUS—FATE OF POPE JOHN I.—JUSTINIAN'S CODE—GREGORY THE GREAT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the labours, and many noble triumphs of the champions of true religion, the errors which had been introduced into the church, continued to disturb its peace for several ages. Thus Arianism, as we have seen, still harassed the Christians of Africa, and excited against them the wrath of its tyrannical rulers. In the remoter provinces of the East, Nestorianism was daily acquiring a firmer settlement; while throughout the West, Pelagianism, either in its original form, or in its modified character of semi-pelagianism, was lurking in almost every church, and breeding doubts in the minds of thousands, on the Scripture doctrine of original sin, and the necessity of divine grace for man's regeneration and salvation. In Italy it was openly taught, under the pontificate of Pope Gelasius, by an old man named Seneca. He denied the existence of original sin, and asserted that the proper use of our free-will suffices to procure our acceptance with God, and eternal life. Gelasius summoned the heretical teacher to Rome, and employed both learning and persuasion in the endeavour to turn him from his errors, but in vain; and Seneca was sent back to receive the censure which he deserved from the bishops of his province. Even these dignitaries themselves, seem to have been not altogether free from the charge of laxity in respect to doctrine.

They had taken no pains to controvert or silence the Pelagian, and Gelasius spoke strongly of their suspicious negligence. We have seen how extensively Pelagianism had been diffused among the British Christians, and that it was only owing to the labours of Germanus and Lupus that the progress of the heresy was for a time stopped. Even in France, which had furnished the most powerful champions of orthodoxy, the same error was boldly preached by Gennadius, and others ; nor were the clergy acquitted of listening with too much tolerance to his dangerous eloquence.

The increasing power of the Roman pontiff tended to prevent the further growth of heresy. But this increase of papal authority was itself the source of evils alike extensive and deplorable. Gelasius, in a letter to the Emperor Anastasius, remarks, that there are two means by which the world is now governed, that is, the sacred authority of the bishops, and the royal power. The charge of the bishops is by so much the greater, because they must render account to God even for kings themselves. "For you know," he adds, "that whilst your dignity elevates you above the rest of mankind, you bow your head before the bishops ; you receive from them the sacraments ; you are subject to them in the order of religion ; you follow their directions ; but they are not servants to your will. If then they obey your laws in respect to civil polity, and temporal affairs, knowing that you have received power from on high, in regard to these things, with what affection ought you not to submit yourself to those who are appointed to distribute the sacraments ? And if the faithful ought generally to be subject to all such bishops as act worthily in regard to divine things, how much more ought every believer to submit

himself to the bishop of that see, which God has rendered superior to all others, and which has ever been recognized as such throughout the church ? ”

Here we see clearly the outline of the system, the main points in the great argument, according to which, in the course of a few ages, the temporal power of kingdoms was prostrated at the foot of the pontifical throne. To accuse Gelasius, or men of his character, of the wicked and ambitious designs which marked the career of some later pontiffs, would be to violate the truth of history, as well as to sin against Christian charity. But it is easy to understand, how the abstract assertion of the superiority of the church to the world might be made, with a holy feeling of its truth, by a man like Gelasius ; while by others, the same assertion would be uttered, not as proclaiming a solemn fact, founded on the nature of things, but as an argument for justifying the haughtiest usurpations of worldly ambition. It is very obvious that, if the servants of God, the agents of his will, enjoy a degree of dignity, or authority, exactly answerable to the work which they have to perform ; to the worth or importance of the gifts which they are charged to distribute,—they who are employed about eternal things, and have the bread of life to bestow, must occupy a higher sphere than those whose authority is wholly occupied about the perishable things of the world. But while such is the truth with regard to the class, it is not true with regard to the individuals composing it, that each has a right to claim the homage which belongs to the order. When the authority of the church is spoken of, it is the authority of the church in its pure, spiritual, evangelical excellence and exaltation. So when that of the clergy is described, it is that of the class contemplated as invested with the noble virtues of a

spiritual priesthood. Now transfer what is said of the church, or allowed to the church, in its universality and perfection, to any portion of the church, corrupt or weak, or wanting in any of the principles of spiritual life ; or transfer what is said of its ministers as a body, to certain individuals among them, with all their personal imperfections ; and it will at once be seen, how easy was the transition from the state of feeling encouraged by Gelasius ; from the abstract assertion which he made of his own power and dignity, to that, under cover of which the church of Rome made its most dangerous advances in the path of tyranny.

Distressing, however, as is the feeling, that the sublime sentiment of the superiority of spiritual things to those which are earthly, should have led to evil, it is impossible not to admire the noble courage and fortitude of the early bishops. By their consciousness of virtue ; by their deep sense of true devotedness to God, and to the cause of holiness and charity, they were sufficiently strengthened against all human fears and considerations, to plead for humanity in the very face of its mightiest enemies. At first, they were contented to exercise this power in the way of *intercession*. They pretended to no other right than that of fairly stating the claims of the miserable, and asking, sometimes for justice, and sometimes for mercy. Thus when the Emperor Theodosius was about to take vengeance on the people of Antioch for some offence against his dignity, the aged bishop Flavian, bowed down with sickness and infirmity, travelled to Constantinople to plead for the offenders. He did not assert authority over the conscience of the emperor, but he reasoned with him on the grounds of their common faith. "I come," he said, "as the messenger of him

whom we both own as our Lord. I come to urge upon you those words of his : ‘ If you forgive men their trespasses, my Father which is in heaven will forgive yours also.’” The season of Easter was just at hand when this occurrence took place. Flavian availed himself of the circumstance to excite the feelings of the emperor. He succeeded ; and Theodosius exclaimed, “ O ! what great thing will it be, if I, a mere man, refrain from wrath against my fellow-men, when the Lord of the universe himself took upon him the form of a servant, and prayed for his murderers, ‘ Father ! forgive them : they know not what they do ?’ ”

The life of St. Ambrose was rich in similar instances of zeal for humanity. But in his case there was less of the character of an intercessor. He reproved, threatened, and punished offending princes. He reminded his clergy how often he had protected the property of widows and orphans against the hand of tyranny ; and exhorted them to recollect that, if they would do honour to their office, they must prove the church to be a shield for the poor and weak against the great ones of the world.

Some check was given to the growing power of
A.D.
 498. Rome by the occasional exaltation of men to the highest stations in the church, whose moral character was as doubtful, as the virtues of others were bright and lofty. Symmachus, who ascended the papal throne at the close of the fifth century, was accused of the most odious crimes. Laurentius, another ecclesiastic, had formed a party sufficiently strong to obtain a counter-election to the dignity. The great Theodoric, who then wielded the sceptre in Italy, had declared, in the first instance, for Symmachus. But neither the power of his friends, nor the favour of the victorious Ostrogoth, was

sufficient to preserve him from the determined hostility of his accusers. Three times was a synod assembled in Rome, to examine the truth of the charges brought against the pontiff. The proceedings thus instituted were unavailing. Symmachus was still proclaimed unworthy of the dignity which he enjoyed. At length, Theodoric consented to summon a council for the purpose of hearing the two parties. Symmachus readily promised to submit to the decision of this assembly. He even purposed to be present at the meeting; and openly declared his readiness to sacrifice the privileges of his station to the show of justice. But the violence of his enemies seems to have prevented his good intentions. Both he and his friends, on proceeding to the synod, were violently assailed by the rabble, whose passions had been excited against them. Symmachus, with at least an appearance of reason, refused after this to appear before the tribunal of the council. Theodoric, who had evidently no wish to proceed in the affair, proclaimed his unwillingness to pass judgment on the absent pontiff; and Symmachus was declared innocent by a decision of the assembly, thus left to its own conclusions.

By this proceeding, a man of very doubtful character was left in possession of the highest dignity in the church for nearly sixteen years. During that period, while he had eulogists who did not shrink from applying to him expressions descriptive of the loftiest virtues, a great portion of the clergy despised his authority, and fostered a spirit of determined schism. Thus the progress of pontifical influence was greatly retarded. A precedent was created for questioning the validity of elections, and the propriety of obeying a pontiff whose right to the throne was rendered doubtful by his vices. The conse-

quences of this affair might be traced in the events of after-times; and in the sentiments with which both the people and clergy viewed the elevation of successive pontiffs.

A striking proof was afforded of the uncertain
 A. D. manner in which some of the popes were likely
 526. to exercise their authority, by John the First. He succeeded Hormisdas, who had been elected on the death of Symmachus. The power of Theodoric was now firmly established in Italy; and, like other princes of his race and country, he was a devoted champion of the Arians. The reign of the Greek emperor Anastasius had been distinguished by a series of the most unhappy convulsions, created by his attachment to the doctrines of the Eutychians. Thus he banished Euphemius, the patriarch of Constantinople, because he refused to resign the letter which he had subscribed at his coronation, and by which he pledged himself to support the orthodox faith, and the decrees of the council of Chalcedon. Macedonius, another patriarch, was also sent into banishment; and died, after many sufferings, at Gangra. These, and other instances of tyranny, excited several provinces in his dominions to sedition; and Anastasius found himself compelled to claim aid and advice of the Roman pontiff. He entreated him to act as a mediator between him and Vitalian, the victorious leader of the Thracians. Vitalian also demanded of the pope a similar support. He had fought on the side of the church, and in defence of the primitive faith; and he looked for the interference of Rome to give permanency to his success.

In answer to these appeals, Hormisdas immediately despatched legates to Constantinople. The instructions given them afford a curious illustration of the caution with which the defender of orthodoxy deemed it neces-

sary to act. "When you arrive in Greece," it was said, "if the bishops visit you, receive them with all becoming respect : and if they prepare a lodging for you, do not refuse it, lest it should seem to the people that you are disinclined to union. But if they ask you to eat, excuse yourselves civilly, and say, 'Entreat the Lord that we may first be able to communicate together at the mystical table ; and then the entertainment which you offer will be far more acceptable.' Receive nothing at their hands, except the use of carriages, if they should be needed. Tell them that you are in want of nothing, but that you hope they will give you their hearts. When you arrive in Constantinople, take the lodging provided for you, and receive no one before you see the emperor, but with great caution, and then only those who are known to be anxious for union, or who come to give you information on the state of affairs."

Cautioning the legates as to their mode of answering the inquiries of the emperor, Hormisdas prepared them against being questioned, as courtiers and ambassadors might look to be, by a suspicious monarch. Thus, if Anastasius said, "Perhaps you have other orders and instructions besides those which you have openly stated ;" they were to answer, "God forbid that it should be so ! We practise no such arts. We come for the sake of God ; and not to offend him. The pope acts with honesty and simplicity. He requires nothing but this, that you do not alter the constitutions of the fathers, but clear the church of heretics. This is the sole object of our commission."

If the emperor should continue the conference, and declare that he intended to summon a council for the purpose of restoring peace and union, the ambassadors

were then to express their thankfulness, but at the same time to add, "The means of establishing tranquillity in the church is to observe what was done by the preceding emperors, Marcian and Leo." If the emperor asked, "What is that?" They were to answer: "They offered no contradiction to the decisions of the council of Chalcedon, and the letter of Saint Leo." If he answered, "And we too acknowledge the council of Chalcedon, and receive the letter of St. Leo," they were to thank him, and give the kiss of peace, saying, "Now we know that God is with you. This is the Catholic faith, without which you cannot be orthodox."

To other corresponding questions and answers, the legates were directed to add their prayers and tears, and implore the emperor to consider the will of God, and his judgments, and the decisions of the fathers of the church, who had reared the sacred edifice on the faith confessed by the holy apostle St. Peter. Anastasius professed his willingness to take immediate measures to accomplish the wishes of the pontiff. The result, however, proved his insincerity; and he died, leaving the church in a state of schism and confusion.

But while Hormisdas thus vigorously supported the cause of truth against imperial pride and heresy, and died in peace after a pontificate of nine years, his successor, John I., proved by his fate how uncertain, in that age, was the tenure of ecclesiastical dignity.

The emperor Anastasius had been succeeded by Justin, a prince of very different character, and as anxious to uphold the orthodox doctrine, as his predecessor had been to promote that of the Eutychians. One of Justin's first acts was the banishment of the Arian bishops. Theodoric heard of this proceeding with undissembled

wrath. He immediately sent letters to Constantinople, demanding the restoration of the deposed prelates. Unless this were done, he would instantly expel, he declared, the orthodox bishops from every part of his dominions.

Summoning the pope to Ravenna, he ordered him to proceed at once, as his ambassador to Constantinople. The pontiff dared not refuse ; but immediately set off on his journey, accompanied by four senators. It was the first time that a pope had visited Constantinople ; and his reception was such as he had a right to expect. The emperor Justin even carried his veneration so far, as to desire to receive his crown at the hands of the pontiff. No less was the homage shown him by the patriarch ; the other bishops of the East following these examples of reverence for his person and office, by expressions of the profoundest regard. Having represented to the emperor the danger to which the church in Italy would be exposed, if he refused to reverse his order respecting the Arians, Justin consented to his wishes ; and the pope returned to Ravenna, well satisfied with the result of his mission.

But it was not so with Theodoric. He had heard of the reception which John had enjoyed in Constantinople. His jealousy was excited, and he suspected the unfortunate pontiff of having taken some part in a conspiracy which had been discovered in his absence. Two senators, Symmachus, and the celebrated Boetius, author of the "Consolations of Philosophy," were already immured in a dungeon, and hourly expected the death which they at length suffered at the hands of the executioner. Immediately on reaching Ravenna, the pope, and his four companions, were seized and thrown into prison. The former

would, probably, have speedily shared the fate of Symmachus and Boetius ; but Theodoric, haughty as he was, trembled at the consequences which might attend the murder of a pope. He, therefore, contented himself with keeping him closely confined in an unhealthy prison. Here the unjustly accused pontiff lingered, for some time ; and then died of the maladies brought on by the miseries to which he was exposed.

This occurrence affords a strong proof that the papal power was at that period but very imperfectly established ; that its principles were as yet very far from being developed in their relation to the temporal sovereignty. We do not find that Theodoric experienced any great remorse or alarm in contemplating the fate of the pope. His thoughts were wholly occupied about Symmachus. The image of the murdered senator haunted him day and night. His disturbed mind was ready to convert everything into the form of his victim. One day when he was sitting at dinner, the attendants brought in the head of a large fish, and placed it, as a part of the repast, upon the table. Theodoric fixed his gaze intently upon the head. The eyes seemed red and glaring ; the lips appeared to quiver ; and the wretched king, seized with a paroxysm of terror, exclaimed, in his horror, that it was the head of Symmachus. No words could pacify him. He desired to be laid on his bed. His favourite physician being called, he related to him what he had seen, and with floods of tears confessed the remorse which he suffered at the recollection of his crime. Shortly after this, he expired ; leaving behind him a record of mingled virtues and atrocities.

The long reign of the Emperor Justinian, in the East, was of great value to the orthodox church and faith. He

openly proclaimed his resolve to tolerate no doctrine which could not be proved to harmonize with the creed established by the four general councils. The victories gained by his armies, under the conduct of Belisarius and Narses, greatly aided him in his efforts on the side of religion. Africa was delivered from the yoke of the Arian Vandals; the Persians, who had more cruelly than any other people persecuted the Christians, were driven beyond the Euphrates; and the Goths themselves fled, at first, in helpless confusion before the conquering arm of Belisarius. Narses gained similar successes; and a promise was given, for a time, of the return of the empire to its ancient glory.

But while we ought rather to rejoice at the disappointment of these proud expectations, in their political aspect, the power enjoyed by Justinian was productive of great good to religion, by affording time for the establishment of its genuine doctrines. In another respect, also, it was of vast service to the general interests of justice and humanity. The vast body of Roman laws presented a field for study, which might well alarm even the acutest and most industrious inquirers. But while thus indefinite by its very extent, this system of jurisprudence afforded a far less ready and sure protection to the different classes of society, than by its nature and spirit it was admirably calculated to afford.

To correct the evils arising from this state of the laws, Justinian appointed a commission of ten learned and experienced men, who were to compile and arrange in order the imperial constitutions. This important labour was completed in the year 529, and early in the following year its compilation was ratified as the New Justinian Code. But this was only a part of the emperor's grand

design. It was his wish to collect into one well-digested mass, the opinions and decisions which the greatest lawyers of different ages had given on the interpretation of the constitutions. To accomplish this purpose, he selected the celebrated Tribonian as the head of a new commission. The persons whom Tribonian chose for his coadjutors were the most experienced professors of the law ; and the commission was directed by the emperor to arrange their collection under fifty heads, giving to each book so formed its befitting title. They were also desired to let neither repetition nor inconsistency deform the work ; to admit nothing obsolete ; to exclude nothing that was really valuable. The necessity of a proper, but cautious speed, was also urged upon them ; and so well did they obey these injunctions, that in the course of three years the work was finished, and in a manner which has justly rendered it the admiration of all succeeding ages. The compilation was entitled, *Digesta*, or *Pandectæ* ; and though, aided by the light of modern times, it is easy to see how much more perfect an arrangement might have been made, the gift of such a work was all-important to the age on which it was bestowed, and not only to that, but to succeeding ages. Many a principle of practical worth, many a rule of common sense many a just claim, was kept alive and preserved through the facility with which, from this time, an appeal might be made to the authorized code of law.

About six years after its publication, Justinian ordered a revision of the code to be made, and certain decisions of his own to be added to the original collection. Thus sixteen edicts, and one hundred and sixty-eight *novellæ*, as they were called, formed a part of the revised code. Nor did Justinian remain satisfied even with this. He directed the compilation of an elementary work on the general princi-

ples of law. Hence arose the famous Institutes ; and hence the way was opened for the study of a science which employed, during many centuries, the most active and the most powerful of intellects.

During the reign of Justinian's successor, the younger Justin, the affairs of the empire suffered an alarming reverse : Albinus, king of the Lombards, obtained a firm settlement in the fairest part of Italy ; the Goths became more than ever powerful in Spain ; and the Persians, recovering all that they had lost, insolently despised the offers of peace made them by the emperor. Some hope of prosperity was entertained on the election of Tiberius to a share in the government of the empire ; but neither this event, nor the accession of Mauritius, a skilful soldier, to the throne, was followed by any improvement in the state of affairs. Phocas, who obtained the imperial dignity at the beginning of the seventh century, is described as furnishing an example of every vice which can degrade a monarch. Thus the prospects of the world seemed to grow daily darker ; and the only supports which the interests of humanity could now possess, were those furnished them by the sanctions which religion gave to law.

The character of the popes and patriarchs during this period, sometimes exhibited a noble firmness, and many signs of faithfulness and spirituality. At others, we see it deformed by all the marks of that increasing selfishness and ambition, with which the circumstances of the world, as well as any innate defect of principle, tended now so greatly to infect the feelings of the clergy. Thus, both Euphenius and Macedonius, patriarchs of Constantinople, preferred undergoing the most cruel banishment, to compromising their duty to the church. While, on the other hand, their successors, John of Cappadocia, Anthimus, and some

others, exhibited in their conduct a melancholy mixture of servility and arrogance. Again : Agapetus, one of the Roman pontiffs, was sent on a mission to Constantinople by Theodatus, king of the Goths. The mission was undertaken to save this prince, who had been guilty of some signal barbarity, from the chastisement with which he was threatened by Justinian. Some doubts are expressed as to the perfect orthodoxy of the emperor at that period ; and he is said to have employed his powerful persuasions to induce the pope to allow of some modification of doctrine. Agapetus is reported to have boldly answered, that he supposed he had been sent to a most Christian emperor ; whereas he now found that this same emperor was but a Diocletian... The same noble spirit was exhibited by Silverius, who, on being desired by the empress to restore a Eutychian bishop to communion, sternly refused, and was sent into exile, preferring banishment and an early death, to the compromise of his faith. Vigilius, the successor of Silverius, was the mere creature of the court. He obtained the dignity by basely promising to further the designs of the empress, a proud and vicious woman, infected with all the errors of the times. No sooner, however, had Vigilius succeeded in gaining his object, than he began to make the attempt of freeing himself from the yoke to which he had so unworthily submitted. But he had miscalculated his ability. Enraged at the answer which Vigilius sent to her letters, that " evil promises were not to be kept," Theodora ordered him to be apprehended and conveyed to Constantinople. This command was speedily obeyed ; and the unhappy pontiff was led publicly through the city, with a cord about his neck, and then cast into the common prison. The feeling which he displayed amid these misfortunes and disgraces, was

that of a sincere penitent. He confessed that his sins merited the divine chastisement, and that God had put upon him but a portion of the grief which he deserved to suffer. By the solicitation of Narses, the imperial general, he was at length set at liberty ; but, borne down by suffering, he died on his journey home.

Passing over the names of some other pontiffs, who only shared the ordinary trials of the age, we come to that of Gregory the Great, whose personal character, and numerous labours, will not allow us to mention him without a more particular notice.

This celebrated pontiff was born at Rome, and was of a noble family, his father being a senator, and possessed of a splendid estate.* The education which he received was becoming his rank ; and the abilities with which he was naturally endowed, gave a double value to the care employed in his instruction. At an early period of his youth, he began to feel the importance of cultivating religious impressions. This sentiment gained strength with his years ; and he resolved to devote himself earnestly to the great work of salvation. The station which his family occupied prevented his adopting those simple habits of living, to which his conscience and his feelings would now have led him. He rose to high offices in the government ; and thus felt himself obliged to content himself with practising his duties as a Christian, and following the course of life common to persons of his rank.

Though satisfied, for some time, with this line of conduct, Gregory found himself becoming less and less at ease under the restraint which his pious feelings suffered in the world. The death of his father left him at liberty

* Vita S. Gregorii. Mabillon. Act. Sanct. Ord. S. Benedicti. Sæculum I. p. 386.

to follow more freely the dictates of his mind and conscience. Throwing aside his silken robes and splendid ornaments, he clad himself in the simplest garb, and commenced those works of charity, which rendered his name so dear to the poor and afflicted.

Having dispensed large sums of money in relieving the most necessitous of his fellow-citizens, he proceeded to Sicily, where he established six monasteries, intending them as schools of piety, and as a refuge for the devout and pious, to whom the world, in its present troubled state, could afford no shelter. On his return to Rome, he converted his own house into a religious establishment. There he practised the strictest species of ascetic discipline ; but while he denied himself every species of indulgence, or any intercourse with the world which might disturb the devotional character of his thoughts, he was unwearied in acts of charity, and labours among the poor. Such a man was not likely to remain unobserved by the reigning pontiff. After having been some time engaged as the abbot of a monastery, he was drawn out of his retirement, and ordained as one of the chief deacons of the Roman church. In this capacity he gained still greater reputation ; and his habits of business equalling his piety, he was selected by the pope to undertake a mission to Constantinople.

During his stay in that city, he still preserved his strict monastic mode of living. To render the leisure which he enjoyed, after performing his public duties, profitable to those around him, he began to expound the book of Job. He also readily entered into conversation on any important subject of religion. Thus he held an interesting, but, it would appear, a somewhat severe discussion, with the patriarch Eutyginus, on the nature of the body

after the resurrection. The latter had written a treatise, in which he stated, that the body on rising from the grave will no longer be palpable, but will be more subtle than air. St. Gregory objected to this opinion the words of our Lord : "Touch and see : a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." The patriarch replied, that Jesus thus spoke in order to take all doubt from the minds of the disciples respecting the reality of his resurrection. "It is marvellous," rejoined St. Gregory, "that in order to remove doubt, he should have given cause to doubt." Eutyginus answered : "That our Lord's body was palpable when he showed it to his disciples ; but that it became subtle as soon as He had confirmed their faith." Gregory opposed to this assertion the words of Saint Paul : "Jesus Christ being risen, dieth no more ;" and argued from this that he underwent no further change after his resurrection. Eutyginus immediately objected to this, those other words of St. Paul : "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Gregory answered, that the terms, "flesh and blood," are taken in two senses in Scripture ; for that sometimes they mean simple human nature, and, at others, the corruption of sin. He concluded the discussion by adducing numerous proofs of the truth, that the nature of the flesh will still remain, even in the midst of celestial glories, but delivered from the taint and the infirmities which it at present suffers.

The death of Pelagius II. leaving the pontifical
 A. D. chair at their disposal, the senate and people
 590 of Rome lost no time in electing Gregory to the
 vacant dignity. Gregory heard of the election with unaffected grief and dismay. He delighted in a life of contemplation ; and to the motives which he thence had for

wishing to avoid such an elevation, were added those which naturally suggested themselves to a mind so pious and ingenuous as his. His return to Rome had taken place while that city was labouring under the heaviest calamities. A fearful pestilence was now raging among the inhabitants. Gregory had secretly sent a messenger to the emperor at Constantinople, entreating him not to grant the ratification, allowed to be necessary in those times, of his election to the pontificate. But his design was suspected, and both the senators and people, resolving not to be thwarted in their wishes, employed their utmost vigilance to disappoint his purpose. They succeeded in this; for the messenger whom he had despatched was overtaken on the road and detained; while the bearer of the prefect's announcement of the election, and of the common desire for its ratification, hastened forward to Constantinople, and soon returned with letters from the emperor, expressing his joy, that a man had been chosen so eminently qualified to fulfil the duties of the pontificate.

Gregory was too deeply impressed with the feeling, that he ought in nothing to oppose the will of God, to resist any longer this solemn call to the papacy. He deplored in letters to his different friends, the necessity which called him from his cloister and his studies; from duties which he was able to fulfil, to others, the weight of which overpowered him with anxiety. But he set himself to work in full dependence on Divine grace. His first act was a public profession of faith according to the primitive creed of the Christian church. This was his starting point; and many friends of religion in its simple purity will lament that he did not content himself with upholding and illustrating the doctrines which were so precious to his heart.

The care which he took to reform the discipline of his church, may be best understood from his *Pastoral*, a work which he wrote to illustrate what he believed to be the proper duties and obligations of the clergy. It is dedicated to John, bishop of Ravenna, who severely reprobated Gregory for his efforts to avoid accepting the papacy. The venerable author begins with showing, how rash it was for any one to undertake the care of souls, who had neither the capacity nor the knowledge for discharging such a duty ; for performing a work which he calls, the art of arts, the science of sciences. He deplores the blindness of those who are so unhappy as to seek ecclesiastical offices, under pretence of promoting the salvation of souls, when, in reality, they have no desire but the satisfaction of their own ambition ; the pride of appearing great and learned. He laments the state of the people who are subject to the rule of such ambitious and ignorant men, unfitted to instruct them either by lessons or example. Passing, in the next place, to the mention of those who have acquired learning, without reducing it to practice, he expresses his abhorrence of those who bring a scandal upon the church, by acting inconsistently with the doctrines which they teach. In concluding the first part of his work, he reproves those who, from too great humility, reject the call to ecclesiastical offices, thereby opposing the order of Providence, as well as those who too anxiously and ardently desire them. Thus he advises him who has the qualifications for becoming a guide of souls to accept the office, when urged upon him ; while, on the other hand, he warns him, who is conscious of wanting such qualifications, never to undertake the responsibilities of an ecclesiastical employment, however tempted to do so by vanity or interest.

In the second part of the work, he speaks particularly of the duties, and proper virtues, of a churchman. Thus he shows that there ought to be a great difference between the virtues of a pastor, and those to be looked for in the people; that the very thoughts of the former ought to be immaculately pure; that prudence and discretion should govern his silence; that his conversation should be ever edifying; that he should be tender and compassionate to all men; sublime in contemplation, but lowly in spirit; that his zeal for justice should prompt him to oppose the vices of bad men; that his occasional employment about outward things should in no wise lessen his care for those which are internal; while his concern for the latter should not render him indifferent to the former.

The third part of the work is devoted to remarks on the nature of the instruction which pastors ought to give their flocks. His knowledge of mankind, and of the workings of the human heart, are evidently conspicuous in his observations on this subject. Let the pastor, he says, proportion his instructions, advices, reproofs, and exhortations, to the constitution, state, temper, inclinations, and habits, to the virtues and the vices of those to whom he speaks. In the same manner he admonishes preachers, to be very cautious not so to commend particular virtues, so to lead their hearers into the opposite vices. Thus he desires them to preach humility to the proud, but not so as to increase the fear of the timid; to excite the slothful to diligence, but not so as to justify the active in too great a devotion to business; to rebuke the impatient, but to be cautious not to encourage the slothful; and to exhort the covetous to give liberally, but not to justify the prodigal.

In the fourth part he insists upon the duty to which pastors ought to think themselves bound, of retiring within themselves, and confessing their sins and infirmities before God, to prevent their fostering any vain notion of their worth or dignity. At the end of the work he thus addresses the Bishop of Ravenna : " You see, my dear friend, that your chiding has obliged me to write to you. But while I thus labour to show what a true pastor ought to be, I am but like a rough and clownish painter, representing upon canvass the figure of some graceful and accomplished person. I am intruding into the office of conducting others to the port of perfection, while I am myself tossed about by the floods of my own passions and vices. I intreat you, therefore, to support me by the merit of your prayers, as by a plank given me in shipwreck ; so that while I feel myself sinking in the waters of the tempestuous sea of this world, borne down, as it were, by the weight of my own desires, your charitable hand may relieve me, and raise me above the waves."*

While we have here an excellent specimen of the good sense and feeling which inspired Gregory in his views of clerical responsibility, we have also in several of his letters, admirable proofs of his superiority to the narrow and dangerous notions which were beginning to gain ground on the subject of ecclesiastical power. Thus he proclaimed his abhorrence of the exercise of force in the concerns of religion ; and reminded those who would employ it, that if he had chosen, he might have destroyed the whole nation of the Lombards, but was taught not to do so by the spirit of the church. He expressed his desire, that justice and moderation might be exercised towards the

Jews, and that no violence should ever be employed in endeavours to convert them. They were not to be baptized by compulsion, lest the sacred founts of regeneration might be made the occasion of a second death, more deadly than the first: they were rather to be allured by kindness, argument, and persuasion. A Jew having been baptized, appeared the next day in the synagogue, bearing the cross, and other insignia of the church. Employing the influence which he had newly acquired, he succeeded in depriving his former brethren of their synagogue, and decorated the building with Christian ornaments. Gregory, on hearing of the circumstance, expressed his disapproval of the conduct of the new convert, ordered the cross to be removed from the synagogue; and restored the place to its original owners.

As an illustration of the sentiments which he entertained respecting the highest ecclesiastical dignity, we may quote his remarks, addressed to the Emperor Mauritius, when the patriarch of Constantinople, John the Younger, assumed the title of Universal Patriarch. He observes in his letter to the emperor, that although Jesus Christ committed to Peter the care of all the church, yet even Peter himself was never called a universal apostle: that the title of universal bishop is against the rules of the gospel, and the appointment of the canons; that there could not be a universal bishop, without injury to the authority of all the rest; and that if the Bishop of Constantinople were universal bishop, and it should happen that he fell into heresy, it might be said, that the universal church was fallen into the same sin and ruin.*

To this he added, that the Council of Chalcedon had

* Op. Greg. Mag. lib. v. Epis. xviii.

offered the title here spoken of to St. Leo ; but that neither he, nor his successors, would accept it, lest by introducing the custom of giving something peculiar to one bishop, the rights which belong to the bishops generally might be invaded and weakened.

Gregory's efforts in this matter were unavailing. The patriarch of Constantinople retained the ambitious title which he had adopted ; and the time was soon to come, when the arguments of the venerable pontiff would have as little weight at Rome, as at Constantinople.

The sixth century presents us with a picture in which the lights and shadows of history are strangely intermingled. We see, on the one side, the advancing power of the gospel ; on the other, the fall of civilized states, trampled under foot by hosts of barbarian invaders. To this period is ascribed the conversion of the Abasgi,* a people inhabiting the eastern coast of the Euxine ; the Heruli, who dwelt along the north^{*} bank of the Danube ; and several other tribes, dwelling in the neighbouring lands. In the remote parts of Lybia, as well as in Gaul and Spain, large numbers of Jews are said to have embraced the gospel. The King of Abyssinia was so zealous in the cause of Christianity, that he led an army into Arabia to defend its persecuted professors against their enemies in that country. Thus a promise was given, that by the patience and courage of the disciples of Christ, the world would in due time be brought to the knowledge of the truth ; and that the darkness of heathenism would gradually melt away before its refulgent beams.

But, on the other side, the cause of the old idolatry was still defended by several of the scholars and philosophers

* Eccles. Hist. Magd. cent. vi. c. ii.

of Greece and Egypt. Such was the case with the celebrated lawyer Tribonian, the compiler of the Justinian Code, and with Agathias, the historian; both of whom, notwithstanding the law against the preferment of a heathen, held important public offices. The state of learning among the Christian clergy afforded little encouragement to those who hoped for the general advancement of civilization, and the diffusion of those benign influences which might be expected to attend the introduction of habits of correct thinking and reasoning. It is true, that schools were now considered a necessary portion of a cathedral establishment, and that young persons were there instructed in what were termed the seven liberal arts, namely, grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. The inmates of monasteries were also expected to spend a part of their time in the study of the Scriptures, and the writings of the ancient fathers. But there was no healthy, intellectual feeling, prompting to the pursuit of truth. Superstition daily gained greater influence on the minds of the people and their teachers. By degrees, the Scriptures became less valued for their intrinsic worth, than for the support which they were forced into giving to the subtleties of a vain imagination. It was the same with the little measure of secular knowledge possessed in those times. Science, such as it was, became the auxiliary of superstition; and thus Christianity had to struggle, not only against the rooted principles of worldly pride and error, but against the bold vanities of its own disciples.

Gregory the Great was himself imbued with all the learning of the age; and he exhibited in his character many of its most peculiar features. To him the Western churches were indebted for an improved discipline; but

he was the author also of that vast ceremonial ritual, under the cover of which so much of superstition, so much of pride and worldliness, found its way into the sanctuary. He was full of good sense and knowledge, yet he gave credit to the most unfounded accounts of prodigies and miracles. His whole life was spent in endeavours to promote true religion ; yet we shall find that at the close of his pontificate, the church was on the point of becoming involved in the gloomiest darkness.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CHURCH IN BRITAIN—PELAGIANISM—LOW STATE OF
MORALS—THE ANGLO-SAXONS—ST. GREGORY AND AUGUSTINE
—MISSION TO BRITAIN—ETHELBERT—CONVERTS TO CHRIS-
TIANITY.

WHILE such were the events generally affecting the state of the church at large, that apostolic branch of it established in this country, was subjected to important changes and reverses. The calamities brought upon the nation by the irruption of the Picts and Scots, and then by the Saxons, had humbled the pride, and corrected some of the worst vices of both the princes and the people. Germanus again visited England after his memorable conference with the Pelagians; and the pure evangelical doctrine which he taught, still brought forth fruit in some few thoughtful minds. The powerful hand with which the Saxons governed the people, so insiduously conquered, produced a degree of tranquillity to which the country had long been a stranger. But the clergy took little advantage of this season of repose. In Wales and Cornwall, some remains of the ancient British church long existed, retaining the main features of a primitive institution. But it was confined within the narrowest limits; and in all the rest of the country, coldness and indifference as to religion, characterized both the clergy and the people. Such of them as remembered the miseries to which they had been exposed by the first judgment of God, kept, it is said, within bounds, and refrained from the vices which were followed by calamities so numerous and terrible. But

when these died, and another generation succeeded, which knew nothing of those times, and was only acquainted with the present peaceable state of things, all the bonds of sincerity and justice were so entirely broken, that there was not only no trace of them remaining, but few persons seemed to be aware that such virtues had ever existed. The few here alluded to were, says Gildas, compared with the great multitude which were daily rushing headlong down to hell, so small a number, that our reverend mother, the church, scarcely beheld them, her only true children, reposing in her bosom. Their worthy lives, he continues, were a pattern to all men ; they were beloved of God ; and by their prayers, as by certain pillars and most profitable supporters, the infirmity of the rest was sustained, so that it might not be utterly broken down.*

This melancholy picture of the state of the British church, at the commencement of the Saxon dominion, may well prepare us for the accounts which immediately follow, of its almost total decline. The noble struggles of King Arthur in the cause not only of his country, but of learning and religion, contributed greatly to preserve, for a time, some trace of the ancient national faith. But it was among the mountains of Wales only † that the

* " At illis decedentibus, cum successisset ætas tempestatis illius nescia, et præsentis tantum serenitatis experta ; ita cuncta veritatis ac justitiæ moderamina concussa ac subversa sunt, ut eorum, non dicam vestigium, sed ne monimentum quidem in supradictis prope-modum ordinibus appareat, exceptis paucis, et valde paucis, qui ob aurissonum tantæ multitudinis, quæ quotidie prona fuit ad Tartara, tam brevis numeri habentur, ut eos quodammodo venerabilis mater ecclesia, ut in sinu suo recumbentes non videat, quos solos veros habet."—Gildas. Britan. Gent. Hist. c. xxvi.

† Cornwall and some part of Cumberland are named as affording

piety and courage of the British prince left any durable monument. The rest of the country was divided among the Saxon chiefs ; and as their rule became better confirmed, and their institutions were more generally established, the very foundations of the church seemed to be lost sight of, and England returned, as it were, to the condition of a heathen land.

Such was the view which the Christians of other countries took of its present state, that they regarded it as demanding the exercise of missionary zeal no less than parts of the world professedly pagan. This will account for the efforts made by Gregory for its conversion, and explain the language which he uses in his letters to Augustine, when speaking of the English church. It was while he occupied the station of one of the deacons in the church of Rome, that this excellent man formed the idea of a mission to England. Walking one day through the public place, in which slaves were usually exposed for sale, his notice was directed to some youths whose fair, ingenuous looks induced him to ask from what country they were brought. "From the isle of Britain," was the answer. "Are the inhabitants of that island Christians?" he continued. "No : they are pagans," was the reply. "Alas !" said Gregory, "that the author of darkness should have dominion over a people with such bright countenances. But what is the name of their particular nation?" "They are called Angli," replied the merchants. "And well they may," said Gregory, playing upon the word ; "for they have angel-like faces, and they ought to be co-heirs with the angels in heaven. In what province of England did they live?"

a shelter for the British church longer than any other part of England.

"In *Deira*." Again mingling the earnest expression of his thoughts with wit, Gregory replied, "They must be freed *de Dei ira*, from the anger of God. How is the king of that country named?" "Ella." Gregory instantly rejoined, "Surely hallelujah ought to be sung in his kingdom to the praise of that God who created all things."

The impression made on Gregory's mind was not a weak or transient one. He felt moved by the strong conviction that means ought to be employed by his church, to rescue the Anglians and their country from the bondage of paganism. Inspired with the most generous zeal, he sought the pontiff Pelagius, and, describing to him his sentiments, begged that he might be allowed to go himself as a missionary to the distant island. But the piety and talents of Gregory rendered his services indispensable to the aged pontiff. It was long, therefore, before he could be induced to give his consent to his undertaking so perilous a labour. Obligated, however, to yield to his earnest entreaties, he at length gave his unwilling assent, and Gregory prepared for his departure. But another obstacle now presented itself. No sooner was it known that the venerated deacon was on the point of leaving for a distant land, than the people, to whom he was endeared by countless acts of charity and religion, rose in a body, and clamorously insisted upon his being retained among them. Augustine was too affectionately attached to his flock to do violence to their wishes, and wisely resolved to await some more favourable opportunity for accomplishing his design. He had not long to wait. Pelagius died soon after the occurrence above related, and Gregory was elevated to the papal throne.

Among the first cares of the new pontiff, was that

which concerned the mission to England. The power and resources which he now possessed, enabled him to fulfil his design in a manner proportionable to its importance. Choosing from among the members of the religious orders, a man of some attainments and known piety, the celebrated Augustine, he sent him forth, with forty companions, to attempt the great work of converting the English. Their zeal, and the remembered exhortations of Gregory, were sufficient for the first few days of their journey to support the spirits of these missionaries. But in a short time, as their minds lost the excitement which originally stirred them, they began to think of the dangers and difficulties of the undertaking. Their apprehensions were further increased by the reports of the monks and clergy whom they met on the road. At length they were altogether cast down by the imaginary terrors which floated before their eyes. They resolved to go no further till they had represented their fears to the pontiff; and they, therefore, sent Augustine back to Rome, desiring him, if possible, to procure the recall of the whole party.*

But Gregory was not to be moved by such appeals. It grieved him to find how little of his own spirit animated the missionaries; and directing Augustine to hasten to rejoin his brethren, he furnished him with this epistle with which to reanimate their zeal:—"Gregory, the servant of the servants of God, to the servants of our Lord. Forasmuch as it had been better not to begin a good work, than to think of desisting from that which

* "Qui susceptæ peregrinationis post dies aliquot inertī tædio prægravati, redire domum potiùs, quàm barbaram, feram, incredulamque gentem, cujus nec linguam intelligerent, adire deciverunt."
—Acta Sanctorum. t. i. lib. ii. c. iv.

has ~~been~~ begun, it behoves you, most beloved sons, to fulfil the good work which by the help of our Lord you have undertaken. Let not, therefore, the toil of the journey, nor the tongues of evil-speaking men deter you ; but with all possible earnestness and zeal perform that which, by God's direction, you have undertaken, being assured that much labour is followed by an eternal reward. When Augustine, your chief, whom we also constitute your abbot, returns, humbly obey him in all things ; knowing that whatsoever you shall do by his direction, will in all respects be available to your souls. Almighty God protect you with his grace, and grant that I may see the fruits of your labour in the heavenly country ; inasmuch as though I cannot labour with you, I shall partake in the joy of the reward, because I am willing to labour. God keep you in safety, my most beloved sons."

Gregory also wrote at the same time to Etherius, bishop of Arles, exhorting him to render Augustine all the aid in his power, for the accomplishment of the mission :—"To our most reverend and holy brother, Etherius, fellow bishop, Gregory the servant of the servants of God. Although religious men stand in no need of recommendation with priests who have the charity which is pleasing to God, yet, as a proper opportunity is offered to write, we have thought fit to send you our letter, to inform you that we have directed thither, for the good of souls, the bearer of these presents, Augustine, the servant of God, of whose industry we are assured, with other servants of God, whom it is requisite that your holiness assist with priestly affection, and afford him all the comfort in your power. And to the end that you may be the more ready in your assistance, we have

enjoined him particularly to inform you of the occasion of his coming, knowing that, when you are acquainted with it, you will, as the matter requires, for the sake of God, zealously render him your aid."

At the time of Augustine's arrival in Britain, Ethelbert was king of Kent. His dominions extended, it is said, as far as the great river Humber, by which the southern Saxons were divided from those of the north.* On the east of Kent was the Isle of Thanet, containing, at that time, about six hundred families. On this island Augustine landed; and having interpreters with him, he immediately sent messengers to Ethelbert, stating that he and his brethren had come from Rome, bringing with them very joyful tidings, which would assure to all who accepted them everlasting glory in heaven, and a kingdom that would never end, with the living and true God.

Ethelbert was not altogether ignorant of Christianity. He had married Berta, a daughter of the king of the Franks, and, like the wife of Clovis, this princess had anxiously employed the influence which she exercised over her husband to promote his conversion. Though not succeeding to the utmost of her wishes, she had softened his prejudices against the gospel, and prepared the way for his listening to the more powerful arguments of its accredited teachers. Soon after the arrival of Augustine, he visited the Isle of Thanet, and sought the spot where the missionaries had fixed their temporary abode. A day was appointed for their formally stating the object of their journey to England. Ethelbert still retained his superstitious dread of Christ as the enemy of

* Bede, Hist. Eccles. lib. i. c. xxv.

his gods. To secure himself, therefore, against the power of any evil spirit, he directed that the missionaries should assemble before him in the open air. With only the blue vault of heaven above them, there was less, he believed, to fear, than within the walls of a building.

At the 'time appointed, Augustine and his companions presented themselves before the king, and with all the pomp and ceremony familiar to members of the Roman church. A silver cross was carried before them as a banner; and the image of the crucified Saviour, painted in gorgeous colours, gave further token of their faith. As they advanced, chanting a solemn litany, Ethelbert and his court beheld them with respect and awe.* The fervent eloquence of Augustine produced a still deeper impression, and the king ended the conference by stating that, since the things of which he spoke were as yet strange to his ears, he could not at once yield to their truth; but that he would give him hospitable entertainment at Canterbury, and allow him to make converts of as many of his subjects as were willing to receive the gospel.

Augustine and the other missionaries immediately proceeded to Canterbury. The old church of St. Martin's, built by the Britons, still existed there. It was used by Berta and her chaplain. Thither the people now flocked in crowds to hear Augustine preach. Gregory had chosen him with a full knowledge of his abilities for such a work; and the result proved how rightly he had judged of his capacity. In a short time, many thousands of

* At illi non dæmonicâ, sed divinâ virtute præditi veniebant; crucem pro vexillo ferentes argenteam, et imaginem Domini salvatoris in tabula depictam, letaniasque canentes pro sua simul et eorum propter quos et ad quos venerant, salute æterna, Domino supplicabant. — Bede, lib. i. c. xxv.

persons embraced the faith, and were baptized. It is highly worthy of observation, that Ethelbert is stated to have expressed it as his especial desire that his subjects should be left entirely to the judgment of their own hearts and consciences ; that no compulsion whatever should be employed to make them change their religion, or prevent their adopting the faith newly proposed to them, if it should be their wish. Dispositions like these argue a degree of enlightenment which we should not have expected to find in the rude Saxon. They also prepare us for the event which speedily followed, that is, the conversion of Ethelbert himself.

No sooner had this taken place, than the great body of the people manifested a desire to be instructed in the nature and principles of Christianity. The missionaries, faithful to their duty, readily answered the call of the awakened nation. Augustine now felt the necessity of obtaining consecration as a bishop. For this purpose, he set sail for France, and proceeding to Arles, was ordained by the bishop of that city. He thus became invested with authority to establish a system of church-government, which he deemed important to the furtherance of his designs. But this was a work which required greater knowledge, and a bolder spirit, than Augustine's. It was difficult to tell in what manner the new converts might be best brought to submit themselves to the rule and morals of the church. "The poor Christian Britons," says Fuller,* "living, in the meantime, peaceably at home, there enjoyed God, the gospel, and their mountains ; little skilful in, and less caring for, the modish ceremonies brought over by Augustine. And indeed

* Church History of Great Britain, b. ii. c. 13.

their poverty, which could not go to the cost of Augustine's silver cross, made them worship the God of their fathers after their own homely, but hearty fashion."

To protect himself from the hazard of committing any error in so important a matter, Augustine, immediately after his consecration, sought instruction from Gregory as to the duties of his new station, and the methods which he ought to employ to secure the continuance of the English people in the true faith of the church. Nothing can better illustrate the state of religion at the time than Augustine's questions, and the answers returned by the pontiff

The first inquiry was, "concerning bishops^s; how they were to behave themselves towards their clergy, or into how many portions the things given by the faithful to the altar were to be divided; and how the bishop was to act in the church?" To these questions Pope Gregory answered: "Holy writ, with which no doubt you are well acquainted, testifies on this matter, and particularly St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, in which he endeavoured to instruct him, how he ought to behave in the house of God. It is, however, the custom of the apostolic see, to prescribe these rules to bishops newly ordained, namely, that all the emoluments which are received should be divided into four portions; one for the bishop and his family, for the sake of hospitality and entertainments; another for the clergy; a third for the poor; and the fourth for the repair of churches. But as you, my brother, brought up under monastic rules, ought not to live apart from your clergy in the English church, which, by the power of God, has been lately brought to the faith, so ought you to follow that course of life which our fathers adopted in the infancy of the church, when

none of them said that anything which he possessed was his own, but all things were in common among them. But if there be any clerks, not admitted into sacred orders, who desire to marry, they should take wives, and receive their stipends apart ; for we know it is written by the fathers, of whom we have spoken above, that a distribution was made to every one according as he had need. Care is also to be taken of their stipends ; and provision to be made, and they are to be kept under ecclesiastical rules, that they may live orderly, and attend to singing of psalms, and by the help of God, preserve their hearts, and tongues, and bodies, from all that is unlawful. But as for those that live in common, why need we say anything of making portions or keeping hospitality, and exhibiting mercy ? Inasmuch as all that can be spared, is to be spent in pious and religious works, according to the commands of Him who is the Lord and master of all : ‘ Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you.’ ”

The next question respected the services and sacraments of the church. “ Whereas the faith is one and the same, why are there different customs in different churches ; and why is one custom of masses observed in the holy Roman church, and another in the Gallican church ? ”

To this inquiry Gregory returned the following answer, characterized equally by piety and good sense :—“ You know, my brother, the custom of the Roman church in which you were brought up. But it pleases me, that if you have found anything, either in the Roman or the Gallican, or any other church, which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you carefully make choice of the same ; and sedulously teach the church of the English,

which as yet is new in the faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several churches. - 'For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things.' Choose, therefore, from every church those things that are pious, religious, and upright, and having collected them as it were into a bundle, accustom the minds of the English to their observance."

The question as to what punishment should be inflicted on any one found guilty of robbing a church, is thus answered :—" You may judge, my brother, by the person of the thief in what way he ought to be punished. For there are some who having substance commit theft ; and there are others who transgress through want.* Wherefore it is fitting that some be punished in their purses, others with stripes ; some with more severity, and some more mildly. And when the severity is more, it is to proceed from charity, not from passion ; for it is inflicted on the guilty that he may not be delivered to the fires of hell. It behoves us to maintain discipline among the faithful as good parents among their children, whom they punish with stripes for their faults, and yet intend to make those their heirs whom they thus chasten ; and for those whom they seem to persecute in anger, preserve all they possess. This charity is, therefore, to be kept in mind : and it dictates the measure of the punishment, so that nothing may be done beyond the rule of reason. You may add that they are to restore those things which they have stolen from the church. But, God forbid that the church should make profit from those earthly things which it seems to lose, or seek gain out of such vanities."

These inquiries are followed by others respecting the lawfulness of certain marriages ; after which Augustine asks, " Whether a bishop may be ordained, without other

bishops being present, in case there be so great a distance between them, that they cannot easily come together?" To this Gregory answers, "As for the church of England, in which you are as yet the only bishop, you can no otherwise ordain a bishop than in the absence of other bishops. For when do any bishops ever come from France, that they may be present as witnesses to you in ordaining a bishop? But we would have you, my brother, ordain bishops in such a manner that the said bishops may not be far asunder, to the end, that when a new bishop is to be ordained, there be no difficulty, but that the other bishops whose presence is necessary, may easily come^{*} together. Thus when, by the help of God, bishops shall be so constituted in places everywhere near to one another, no ordination of a bishop is to be performed without assembling three or four bishops. For even in spiritual affairs we may take example from the temporal, that they be wisely and discreetly conducted. It is well known, that when marriages are celebrated in the world, some married persons are assembled, that those who went before in the way of matrimony, may also partake in the joy of the succeeding couple. Why then, at this spiritual ordination, wherein, by means of the sacred ministry, man is joined to God, should not such persons be assembled, as may either rejoice in the advancement of the new bishop, or jointly pour forth their prayers to Almighty God for his preservation?"

The next is a very important question: "How are we to deal with the bishops of France and Britain?" Gregory answers: "We give you no authority over the bishops of France, because the Bishop of Arles received the pall in ancient times from my predecessor; and we are not to deprive him of the authority with which he has been

endowed. If it shall happen, therefore, my brother, that you go over into the province of France, you are to concert with the said Bishop of Arles, how, if there be any faults among the bishops, they may be amended. And if he shall be lukewarm in keeping up discipline, he is to be corrected by your zeal. We have also written to him, that when your holiness shall be in France, he may also use all his endeavours to assist you, and put away from the behaviour of the bishops, all that shall be opposite to the command of our Creator. But you, of your own authority, shall not have power to judge the bishops of France; but by persuading, soothing, and showing good works for them to imitate, you shall bring back the minds of wicked men to the pursuit of holiness; for it is written in the Law, ‘When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbours, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn.’ And thus thou mayest not apply the sickle of judgment in that harvest, which seems to have been committed to another; but by the effect of good works, thou shall clear the Lord’s wheat of the chaff of their vices, and convert it, as it were by eating, into the body of the church. But whatsoever is to be done by authority, must be transacted with the aforesaid Bishop of Arles, lest that should be omitted, which the ancient institution of the fathers has appointed. But as for all the bishops of Britain, we commit them to your care, that the unlearned may be taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority,”*

* Bede, lib. i. c. xxvii. *Britanniarum verò omnes episcopos tuæ paternitati committimus, ut indocti doceantur, infirmi persuasione roborentur, perversi auctoritate corrigantur.*

Gregory, with the desire of exalting Augustine in the eyes of his converts, bestowed upon him the primacy of all England ; and as the sign of his dignity, he sent the pall, which was then beginning to be received in the light of a magnificent addition to episcopal grandeur. He directed him, at the same time, to divide his province into twelve sees ; to establish one in London, the bishop of which was to receive the pall from Rome ; and to erect York into an archbishopric as soon as might seem convenient. The prelates of the two last-mentioned dioceses were to be regarded as of equal dignity, the one taking precedence of the other only according to priority of election.

Knowing the vast importance of nourishing the zeal of Ethelbert, Gregory addressed him in a letter full of persuasive and affecting argument. "The design," he says, "of God Almighty in raising persons of probity to a sovereign station, is to diffuse their good qualities, and exhibit their virtues as a pattern to the people. This design, we understand, is in some measure happily answered in England, within your majesty's dominions ; where you have the sceptre put into your hands, to bring the people to the enjoyment of those privileges of divine grace, with which you yourself have been blessed by God. Therefore, my illustrious son, forget not to maintain your ground, and make a suitable return to the divine bounty. Employ the first opportunity, and exert yourself to enlarge the pale of the church established in your territories. Quicken your zeal for the conversion of the country ; root out the remains of idolatry, and demolish the temples of false worship. Engage your subjects to Christianity, by good example, by encouragement, by discipline, and by all the proper instances of terror and

persuasion ; that the God whose majesty you have owned, and whose worship you have proclaimed on earth, may reward your piety in heaven. And further : by thus promoting the honour of the Almighty God, you will immortalize your fame, and render your memory glorious. It was in this way that the noble Constantine, by freeing his empire from the yoke of paganism, and bringing his subjects back to the confession of the true God, exalted his fame far above that of his predecessors, and increased the grandeur of his character in proportion to that of his virtue. Imitating this sovereign, therefore, may your majesty be induced to employ your best endeavours to promote the adoration of the blessed Trinity among your subjects, that you may excel your ancestors in praise and virtue, and, by contributing to the reformation of your people, may be the better prepared to look for pardon at the great day of judgment ! As for our most reverend brother, Augustine, the bishop, it is just that I should state respecting him, that he is a person remarkable for his knowledge in the holy Scriptures, and for the regularity of his conduct. Be pleased, therefore, to hearken to what he may suggest : remember what he delivers, and practise his instructions ; for if you attend to his discourses, speaking as he does in the name of the Almighty God, God will also be more inclined to hear his prayers, offered up in your behalf. But if you slight his exhortations, which I hope will never be the case, how can you expect the Almighty to hear Augustine for you, when you refuse to hear him for God ? Exert your zeal, therefore, and act in conjunction with him for the diffusion of Christianity, that God may make you partaker of his own kingdom, for making his revelation acknowledged in yours. Further : we desire to acquaint your

majesty, from the holy Scriptures, that the world is approaching its end, and that the eternal kingdom of the saints is ready to begin. Now when the world draws to its close things strange and unheard of will occur. The air and sky will be full of prodigies and terrors; the quality of the seasons will be changed; war, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes will be unwontedly frequent. All these prognosticating signs are not likely to be witnessed in our times; but if you find some of them occurring in your country, be not disturbed at the strange appearance; for these preliminary warnings are sent to awaken our caution; to remind us of the uncertainty of life, and to qualify us for giving a better account of ourselves at the great tribunal. Thus, my illustrious son, I have saluted you in few words; and when the Christian religion has made further progress in your kingdom, I shall desire to correspond with you more at length; for my satisfaction in so doing will be increased, by receiving fresh accounts of the further conversion of your subjects. I have sent you some small presents, which I hope you will not disesteem, considering they bring St. Peter's benediction along with them. May God Almighty bless you with increases of grace! may he finish what he has so mercifully begun; and grant you a long life in this world, and eternal happiness in the next!"*

Gregory wrote, at the same time, to the pious and zealous Berta; and there can be little doubt but that his expression of paternal affection proceeded from a sincere admiration of her genuine Christian virtues.

"Those," he says, "who desire a crown of glory, after they have quitted their sovereignty on earth, must take

* Bede, Eccles Hist. lib. i. c. xxxii.

care to be serviceable to God Almighty in proportion to the power which He has given them, that their good actions may thereby tend to raise them to the height of their desires. We rejoice, therefore, to find your majesty acting according to these views. The intelligence which we received from Laurentius, the priest, and from Peter, the monk, was extremely welcome. They informed us how much our brother and fellow-bishop, Augustine, was aided in his design by your countenance and assistance. We accordingly returned thanks to Almighty God for setting the English in your way, and reserving their conversion for your majesty. For as Helena, of pious memory, mother to Constantine the Great, animated the good dispositions of the Romans, and encouraged them to embrace Christianity, so we hope your majesty's zeal, by the blessing of God, will have the same happy effect upon the English. To speak plainly, your majesty's obligation has commenced long since, to use your utmost interest with the king, your husband, to bring him to the same profession of Christianity with yourself ; this being the only means of making both him and his subjects happy, and increasing your glory in heaven. For since your majesty enjoys the advantage of possessing learning, and the orthodox belief, such an undertaking should neither have been begun late, nor regarded as over difficult."

Gregory then continues : " And now, since God is pleased to furnish you with a fitting opportunity, join your endeavours vigorously with so great a providential overture ; and do your utmost to retrieve the omissions of what is past. Fortify the good dispositions of the most noble king, your husband : urge him forward in his respect for Christianity ; impress him so entirely with the

greatness of God's mercies, and the blessings of the gospel, that he may act with all imaginable zeal for the conversion of his subjects. Such an ardent affection in both of you for this noble object will be a most acceptable instance of devotion to Heaven. And thus may the fame of your pious industry increase, and the truth of what is reported of you become unquestionable. For it is my duty to acquaint you, that not only are your praises, in this respect, heard at Rome, where earnest prayers are made that your lives may long be spared, but your fame has spread to more distant countries, and reached the emperor at Constantinople. Therefore, as you have given so great satisfaction by what is already done in the service of Christianity, so I desire that, by pressing forward on the course, you may perfect so worthy an undertaking ; occasion joy to the angels in heaven ; and thus make an addition to the happiness of the blessed."

Again referring to Augustine, Gregory says : " As to Augustine, our most reverend brother and fellow-bishop, and the rest of the holy men, whom we have sent for the conversion of your nation, forget not to assist them to the utmost of your power ; that, the most noble prince, your husband, and yourself, may reign happily here, and, after a long course of prosperity upon earth, may be translated to eternal glory in heaven. We beseech Almighty God to enrich you with such a measure of his grace, that you may happily pursue and accomplish what has been spoken of, and may be for ever rewarded for doing that which is acceptable in his sight." *

In his letter to Ethelbert, Gregory had expressly directed him to destroy the heathen temples in his domi-

* Greg. Op. Epist. lib. ix. Ep. 59.

nions. But he saw reason to alter his views in this respect. It probably occurred to him, that a different course had been pursued in Rome itself, when Christianity became the established religion of the empire. He might also sagely consider, that it would be long before the English would be able to provide themselves with edifices fitted for public worship, if they had to raise them from new foundations. Influenced by some such motives as these, he instructed the abbot Mellitus, who was setting out for England, to inform Augustine of the change which had taken place in his resolution. The instructions which he gave as to the manner in which the pagan temples were to be consecrated to Christian use, illustrate the character of the times ; and show how rapidly the practice of superstitious rites was on the increase. "Let these places of heathen worship," says Gregory, "be sprinkled with holy water. Let altars be built, and relics placed under them ; for if these temples be well built, it is fit the property of them should be altered ; that the worship of devils be abolished ; and the solemnity changed to the service of the true God : so that, when the natives find these religious structures still standing, they may keep to the place without retaining the error, and be less shocked at their first entrance upon Christianity, by still frequenting the temples which they have been wont to venerate. And since it has been their custom to sacrifice oxen to the devils they adored, this usage ought to be refined on, and altered to an innocent practice."

He then continues to advise, that, upon the anniversary of the saints, whose relics were placed in the edifice, or upon the return of the day on which the church was consecrated, the people should erect booths about the buildings lately rescued from idolatry ; provide an enter-

tainment, and keep a Christian holiday, not sacrificing their cattle to the devil, but killing them for their own refreshment, and praising God for the blessing. "And thus by allowing them some satisfaction of sense, they may relish Christianity the better, and be raised by degrees to the nobler pleasures of the mind ; for unpolished, ignorant people are not to be cured at once. He who intends to reach the summit of an eminence, must rise by gradual advances, and not think to mount at a single leap. Thus God, when he revealed himself to the Israelites in Egypt, did not forbid them the customary rites of sacrificing, but transferred their worship from the devil to himself."*

Augustine's labours were attended with signal success. As in other cases of a similar kind, some degree of mystery is involved in the accounts of his progress. Mention is made of the miracles which he wrought ; and he is warned by Gregory against allowing himself to become proud of the triumphs which he thus achieved. "This supernatural assistance," he says, "ought to be a great comfort to you ; but you ought to be very mindful, at the same time, of your own behaviour. You have reason indeed to rejoice, that the outward pomp and dazzling lustre of miracles have brought the English to the inward reformation and spiritual advantage designed by them ; but then, on the other side, you ought to fear, lest, through human infirmity, you should grow vain of your privileges, and make the splendour of the outside prove a loss to you within."

He then continues to remind him, that when the disciples, "being overjoyed at the evidence and honour of their credentials, told our Saviour, with an air of transport,

* Bede, Eccles. Hist. lib. i. c. xxx. Greg. Epist. lib. ix. Ep. 7th

‘Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name,’* they received this answer, ‘Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you ; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.’” “All the elect,” he adds, “do not work miracles ; and yet all their names are registeted in the court of honour above. Those who are in the interest of truth and virtue, count nothing an advantage which is not beneficial to the world ; nor relish any pleasure but that which will never end.” To be pleased with miracles, he observes, might lead to the suspicion, “that the mind was seeking for gratifications founded on private regards, and temporal interests ; whereas the desire of pleasure ought to be more refined ; the affections being enlarged to the public good, and the thoughts transferred from time to eternity”

Ethelbert's devotion became daily more apparent. He not only listened with earnestness and submission to the teaching of Augustine, but proved his sincerity by performing corresponding works of piety. Thus he resigned his own palace for the use of the church ; and his treasury supplied the funds necessary for the founding of the Augustine monastery in the suburbs of the city. Fresh labourers daily arrived from Rome. They were chiefly of the newly-established Benedictine order, to which Augustine himself belonged. Their arrival in England was hailed with great enthusiasm by their brethren, and the new converts. They brought a plentiful supply of relics, priestly garments, and church ornaments. It was now found necessary to take measures for the government of the remoter districts which had received the gospel. Augustine accordingly endowed two of his companions

with the episcopal dignity. Of these, the one was Justus, whom he consecrated bishop of Rochester; and the other, Mellitus, who was sent into the kingdom of Essex, the sovereign of which was Sabareth, Ethelbert's nephew. This young monarch listened gladly to the preaching of Mellitus, and soon requested to be baptized. Uniting with his uncle in endeavours to promote the interests of Christianity, he laid the foundation of St. Paul's in London, the capital of his dominions. This new church, like those of Canterbury and Rochester, was endowed with certain revenues; and Gregory constituted London the metropolitan see of the southern division of the country. Augustine's personal feelings and associations, however, were all in favour of Canterbury, which thence retained the honour first conferred upon it as the original seat of ecclesiastical power.*

The state of the British Christians could not fail to be a subject of great interest to Augustine. They had long lost their character for primitive piety; and their churches, existing only in remote parts of the country, wanted almost all the signs of power or respectability to which men like Augustine would attach importance.

But the new archbishop of Canterbury must, notwithstanding the poverty of the British churches, have felt many doubts and difficulties as to the mode in which he ought to bear himself towards them. Every principle

* "*Pallium autem et privilegium Archiepiscopatus idem Gregorius Augustino ad Londoniam concessit . . . quia scilicet ad id tempus alterius obscura urbis notitia Romanos non attigisset. Veruntamen, quia primus doctor sedulitate regis, hospitis et civium charitate captus, Cantuariæ incolatum vivens throno annis quindecim et mortuus tumulo fovit: omnis eo in posterum honor translatus.*"—*Will. Malmes. de Gestis Pontif. Angl. l. i.*

which he had learnt at Rome was adverse to his treating them with disrespect ; nor could he, consistently with the acknowledged rights of churches and their bishops, assume an authority which might tend to an invasion of pre-existing claims. The spirit which induced Gregory to send missionaries to England appears to have been one of pure benevolence. As far as he was acquainted with its remote inhabitants, they appeared in the character of a people hopelessly struggling with the miseries of paganism. He knew little, it is probable, of the ancient British church ; and when he instructed Augustine as to the course which it would be proper for him to pursue, he considered the field of his labours as open as it would have been had he sent him into some region of the still unconverted north.

It was not possible, however, for Augustine himself to remain ignorant of the real state of Christianity in England. Tidings must have reached him from many quarters as to the existence of churches which might indeed have fallen into decay, but the foundations of which could still easily be traced by those who were anxious to discover them. To a sensitive and acute mind, the fact, of which Augustine must thus have been apprized, would have presented some important difficulties to its own free, and even beneficial operations. Scruples would have been created as to the lawfulness of establishing new sees in ancient dioceses ; of breaking the succession of the national by the introduction of foreign bishops ; or of proceeding to found a church where a church had been already founded, and that, perhaps, by an apostle.

But, while thoughts of this kind, when rising in a conscientious and spiritual mind, are deserving of profound respect, it is probable that this country would have been long left to the darkness and desolation of heathenism

had they been familiar to Augustine. He entered England as a missionary about to plant the cross where it had never before been seen. The veneration which he entertained for his own church made him forget the pre-existing rights of the old British churches, and he felt no difficulty, therefore, in pursuing the measures which the character of the times and of the people, among whom he had to labour, seemed to render necessary. He was pious, and devoted to the cause of Christianity, but deeply imbued with the strongest notions of the supremacy of the ecclesiastical power from which he derived his authority. Instead of stopping to inquire, therefore, where he might plant a church, or whether no British prelate might be found to legitimize his proceedings, he preached, converted, baptized, allowing nothing to hinder his progress ; and thus beat down many a tower of strength built along the lines of heathenism, which a more timid assailant would have left standing or suffered to rise again, because he feared to occupy the ground.

When Augustine was made acquainted with the still existing power of the British clergy, it soon became evident to him, that means must be employed to determine the relative position of the two ecclesiastical bodies thus established in the country. He seems to have entertained the confident expectation of being able speedily to reduce them to his sway, or, at least, of finding arguments sufficiently strong to induce them to conform, in all important points, to the rule of the Roman church.

In order to accomplish the object which had so greatly interested him, Augustine invited the British prelates to a conference. The place appointed for the meeting is supposed to have been somewhere in Worcestershire, on the borders of the West-Saxon kingdom, and designated

by the name of Augustine's Oak. Few only of the native bishops attended the meeting. They probably viewed the proceedings of the foreigners with suspicion, or even regarded them in the light of invaders. However this may be, Augustine's propositions were well calculated to excite alarm. He desired the bishops to submit themselves unreservedly to the Roman pontiff. The different period at which they celebrated Easter proved the distinct origin of the churches represented by the parties thus assembled. Augustine insisted, among other things, that the British should yield their long-existing practice in this matter to the rule of Rome. But no argument which he could urge, moved the venerable men who were present to forsake the primitive church of the land. A means was then employed by Augustine to convince them of their error, which, in later times, has always been viewed with no slight degree of suspicion. Miracles, while they are the strongest species of evidence, are also that which requires the most careful and scrutinizing examination. A blind man, a Saxon, was summoned by Augustine. The British prelates were challenged to cure him. They failed ; but Augustine himself, it is said, laying his hands on him, restored him immediately to sight. The effect on the minds of the beholders was such as might have been expected. Augustine was acknowledged to be a man of God ; and many of the persons present seemed desirous of subjecting themselves to whatever commands he might issue.

But the popular feeling was not that of the shrewd, observant men whom Augustine was chiefly anxious to convert. They expressed their respect for his piety, but distinctly declared that they could not believe it lawful for them to change customs and rules which had existed

in their church for so many generations. Another conference was agreed upon. In the mean time the British prelates sought the advice of a sage old man, who lived the life of a hermit in some neighbouring solitude.

The chroniclers give a curious account of the conversation which took place between the venerable anchorite and the bishops: "Are we bound," they asked, "to desert our traditions at the preaching of Augustine?" The hermit answered, "If he be a man of God, follow him." "But how shall we be able to make trial thereof?" "The Lord saith, 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.' If, therefore, this Augustine be mild and humble in heart, it is to be believed that he himself beareth the yoke of Christ, and tendereth the same to be borne by you. But if he be cruel and proud, it appeareth that he is not of God, neither ought ye to heed what he saith." "But how shall we make discovery thereof?" "Contrive it so, that he and his may come first into the place of synod, and if he rise up when you draw near unto him, hear him then obediently, knowing him to be a servant of Christ; but if he slight you, and vouchsafe not to rise up unto you, seeing you are more in number, let him be slighted by you."

The aged hermit was evidently well acquainted with human nature as well as with the gospel. A second conference being proposed, the bishops again met Augustine at the appointed place of assembly. He was seated on a lofty chair; and, less as a fellow-bishop than as a haughty potentate. The advice of the hermit was remembered. Augustine in vain urged the British prelates to keep Easter, confess the pope's supremacy, and administer baptism, according to his directions. Dinoh, abbot of Bangor, who spoke for the bishops and clergy

generally, replied, "that they were all and each of them ready to show their reverence for the church of God, the pope of Rome, and all other godly Christians ; to prove their regard for every one in perfect charity ; and, by their whole conduct to evince themselves, both in word and deed, to be the children of God." Dinoth added, "And further obedience than this I cannot understand to be due to him whom you designate as pope and father of fathers. As for any other species of submission, we are under the government of the bishop of Caerleon-upon-Uske, who is our overseer, under God, appointed to keep us in the way of holiness."

The antiquity of the document on which this account is founded, has been disputed ; but that the narrative is substantially true, admits of no doubt. It was in vain that Augustine insisted upon the obedience due to the papal chair ; and whatever answer was given to his claims or arguments, it must have been derived from the determination of the British clergy to preserve the ancient rule of their church, and to resist the attempt of a foreign prelate to deprive them of their independence. Whatever the cause of the angry feelings excited between the two parties, they led to the most deplorable results. Augustine, on leaving the assembly, forewarned the bishops that their rejection of his proffered amity would expose them to powerful enemies, and final ruin. It has been commonly asserted by controversial writers, that Augustine was secretly resolving, when making this declaration, to secure the fulfilment of his own prophecy. There is no fair reason for accusing him of such a crime against justice and humanity. Unhappily, the state of affairs in the country was such, that it required little discernment to foretel, that unless the British, and newly converted

Saxon Christians, united for mutual defence against the common enemy, the one or the other of the two churches must speedily fall a sacrifice to the heathen. Augustine, however unreasonably, regarded himself as entitled to the highest place among the clergy of the land ; but his ambitious assumption of authority was founded on principles with which he had been familiar from childhood ; and though he might express his anger at a resistance which he deemed unrighteous, it is not to be concluded from this, that he was revengeful and sanguinary.

Not long, however, after the conference above described, Ethelfrid, king of the Northumbrians, who had hitherto retained the old religion of the Saxons, invaded Wales, and having entered Caerleon, attacked the inhabitants with an overwhelming force. The British opposed him boldly, but ineffectually. At the moment when Ethelfrid was about to make his fiercest onset, he observed a large body of men on one of the neighbouring heights, occupying a position well fitted for the reserve of an army, but with none of the accompaniments of military display. On inquiring of his officers who the men were, he learnt that they were monks, who had taken up that position on the heights to encourage their countrymen by their presence, and aid them by their prayers. Ethelfrid, by a process of argument easy to a barbarian, concluded that if these monks fought against him by their supplications to Heaven, they ought to be assailed like any other portion of the enemy's army. A detachment of troops was accordingly ordered to ascend the heights. The few soldiers who had been appointed to guard the monks, fled at the moment they saw this formidable party approach. Every hope of deliverance was cut off from the defenceless monks. About fifty only escaped ; the rest fell,

slaughtered like sheep under the swords of the merciless Northumbrians. The main body of the British army shared the same fate; and Augustine's warning, or prophecy, was awfully fulfilled. It is matter of controversy, whether his death occurred before or after this event. Those writers who desire to fix upon him the charge of having instigated the attack made upon the British, endeavour to prove that it occurred some time before his decease. But the venerable Bede, whose statements are generally deserving * of the greatest respect, positively asserts that it did not take place during the life-time of Augustine.*

Whatever the errors of this remarkable man, the proofs of his zeal on behalf of the gospel are too numerous to allow of a doubt as to his earnest and sincere love of its principles. Not free from the influence of the age in which he lived, and wanting that genius or grandeur of character, which enables some men to subject old associations to present duty, he transferred to the new church which he was founding amid a rude and simple people, the unnecessary and questionable principles of foreign institutions. That he was haughty and overbearing, in matters of church-government, seems to be generally allowed; but with all these drawbacks to his Christian character, he may still lay claim to the veneration of posterity. Had he not possessed a large measure of faith, and other evangelical graces, he could never have per-

* "Sicque completum est presagium sancti pontificis Augustini, quamvis ipso jam multo ante tempore ad celestia regna sublato."—Beda, ii. 2. Augustine is generally believed to have died in the year 604, whereas the battle above spoken of is supposed not to have taken place before the year 613.—Usher, Britan. Eccles. Antiq. p. 536.

formed the work which he unquestionably executed. The austerity and simplicity of his mode of living indicate his freedom from any of the lower passions of our nature ; while the courage with which he proclaimed the truth to warlike and barbarous princes, proves no less clearly his possession of many great and noble qualities.

But, independent of these considerations of his personal character, the design which he accomplished entitles him to our gratitude. He found England deserted, for the most part, of its teachers. There was either no zeal, or no courage among the British clergy, sufficient to enable them to undertake the task of converting their Saxon conquerors. The latter had, consequently, been long left to the unwarned, unchastened practice of all their old pagan superstitions. Whatever the purity of the early British churches, the remnant of them which still existed appears to have been wholly incapable of any great ministerial or missionary undertaking. Had it not been for the arrival and labours of Augustine, therefore, the Saxons would probably have remained for many generations without a gleam of intelligence as to the nature of Christianity. All that was wanting to render his work one of pure and exalted evangelical charity, was a superiority to the narrow views which induced him to subject the church of England to the church of Rome ; which blinded him to the claims of the original British church ; and thus induced him to undertake the founding of a new church in the land, instead of proceeding to reinstate that which had been founded by an apostle, or by apostolic missionaries, in a proper condition of efficiency and dignity.

Had he taken this course ; had he employed his great talents, his pious zeal, and numerous advantages, to accomplish this regeneration of the primitive church, no

language would have been too strong for the expression of his praise. By such a measure he would have provided for the evangelizing of the whole country, without the hazard of creating conflicting interests ; he would have preserved the independence of the British church, but, at the same time, have laid the foundation of a permanent and loving union between it, and the other great churches of universal Christendom. By taking a different course, he became chargeable with ambition and injustice. He oppressed an ancient church, deserving of veneration and fostering care ; and he sowed the seeds of dissension between it and his own church, which, though lying hid for centuries, have since sprung up, and borne fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred fold.

But sublime as would have been the results, had Augustine acted with a noble freedom from selfish views, or ecclesiastical pride and prejudice, we are not to undervalue what he actually accomplished, because he did not do that which we now feel would have been so much more glorious. He made salvation known to those who had hitherto despised the name of Jesus. He taught thousands to bow in meek subjection to the living God, who had before worshipped only stocks and stones. His preaching was followed by the sanctification of hearts, till now filled with the basest vices, and the cruellest passions ; and though he erred, through the weakness of his own nature, and the obscurity of some of his own views, we cannot but confess him to have been a servant of God and of Christ, sent, by divine mercy, to deliver perishing multitudes from the bondage of sin and death. ●

Augustine was succeeded by Laurentius, nominated and consecrated by Augustine himself, whose anxiety to preserve the church from temporal interference, induced

him thus to lay the foundation for a regular succession of spiritual rulers. The new primate was inspired with an earnest desire to bring the British and Irish churches into strict communion with his own. There was less difficulty in the case of the Irish church, than in that of the British ; but neither in the one nor the other did Laurentius succeed in subduing it to the yoke of his own. Both churches retained their ancient independence ; and though infected, it appears, with many suspicious principles, they continued to preserve the characteristic features of their primitive constitution.

The death of the princes, in whose reign Augustine and his associates had performed their great work, was followed by events very detrimental to the advancement of the church. Paganism, as more favourable to the vices with which the new sovereigns were imbued, was again permitted to rear its head. Mellitus, and Justus, bishop of Rochester, were obliged to leave their dioceses, and escape to France. Laurentius, despairing of retaining his position, had resolved to follow their example. He wished to prepare for his flight by an act of solemn devotion. On the eve, therefore, of his departure, he ordered his couch to be placed in the church, and there passed the night in prayer and watching. In the midst of his meditations, it is said, he was solemnly warned, by a vision of the apostle Peter, against forsaking his people. He yielded to the stern rebukes heaped upon him ; and, informing the king of what had taken place, succeeded in moving him to a more pious consideration of the truth and nature of the gospel.

By the conversion of Edwin, king of Northumberland, a new and important impulse was given to the Christian cause. This monarch was one of the most accomplished

princes of the age ; and his successes were equal to his merits. In the early part of his career he had been driven from his home, and obliged to seek shelter with Redwald, king of the East-Angles. While at the court of this monarch, the machinations of his enemies were carried on against him with unceasing activity. In the first instance, Redwald was offered a vast sum of gold, if he would consent to Edwin's murder. In the next, ambassadors arrived at his palace with a demand, on the part of a rival prince, that Edwin should be immediately given up, or war would be made against his protector. This threat disturbed even the bold and hospitable Redwald. He became gloomy and reserved in Edwin's presence, and the latter soon perceived that he could not remain much longer safe in East-Anglia. But he knew not where to find protection from the pursuit of his enemies ; and when one of Redwald's courtiers expressed a friendly desire to aid him in his flight, Edwin replied, that he would not appear to throw dishonour on Redwald's hospitality ; and that if he was to perish, he would rather die by the hand of a prince than by that of a common assassin.

It was at night, and near the gate of the palace, that this interview took place between Edwin and the courtier. When the latter retired, the unhappy prince still continued musing on his sad and perilous condition. Midnight was almost at hand ; and the gloom of the surrounding scene favoured the desponding tendency of his thoughts. Suddenly some one approached him unperceived, and with a noiseless step. He might have suspected his intentions ; but the mysterious stranger soon convinced him, by the friendly tone of his low voice, that he meant him no harm. "I know," he said, "that you are dreading some great

calamity. You have reason so to do. What then will you give the person who shall protect you from the expected evil, and dispose Redwald to entertain you still with true and faithful hospitality?" Edwin expressed himself ready to prove his gratitude, were such benefits bestowed upon him, in the best manner in his power. "And if," continued the stranger, "this same person should give you the prospect of a crown, and proclaim you the greatest prince of the English race that ever reigned?" Edwin, strangely excited by this discourse, replied, "that he should regard himself as bound to such a person by the strongest ties of affection." "If then," continued the stranger, "this person, his predictions having proved true, should propose to you a rule and plan of life, altogether different to that which you have hitherto pursued, but most calculated to secure your honour and happiness, would you be governed by his instructions?" Edwin readily answered in the affirmative; and the stranger, placing his right hand on the prince's head, solemnly desired him to recollect the sign, and to prepare for fulfilling his promise whenever that sign should be repeated. He then vanished, leaving no trace of his presence.*

Years had now passed away. Edwin had endured various struggles, and escaped many dangers. He was now a powerful prince, and his marriage with Edelburga, daughter of Ethelbert, had contributed greatly to incline his thoughts to Christianity. But he had not yet received the gospel; and the venerable Paulinus beheld with grief the low and doubtful state of religion throughout his diocese.† The period, however, was now arrived for the

* Bede, Eccles. Hist. lib. ii. c. 12.

† "Ipse, cum esset vir natura sagacissimus, sæpe diu solus resi-

long-desired revolution. Paulinus had received intelligence respecting the obligation imposed on Edwin by his unearthly visitant in East-Anglia. One day when conversing with the king on the subject of religion, the aged bishop raised his right hand and laid it solemnly on the monarch's head. Edwin started as if a tide of new thoughts had suddenly rushed into his mind. He confessed the sign, and the obligations with which it was connected. In a few days, he prepared to meet his nobles ; and then stating his own convictions of the truth of the gospel, set them the example of receiving baptism at the hands of Paulinus. Even Coifi, the high-priest of the Northumbrians, confessed his readiness to embrace Christianity, as offering grounds of hope so much better established, and so much more reasonable than those of his own superstition. One of the nobles, in expressing his thoughts on the subject, said, " Often, O king, hast thou seen, when in the deep winter thou hast been sitting at the feast with thy thanes, and when the fire has burnt bright on the hearth, and the hall has been joyous and warm, while the wind and snow-storm raged without, a bird fly in at the one door, and, hastily fluttering through the room, vanish at the opposite portal. Whilst the bird was in the hall, the rough winter disturbed it not ; but scarcely had it passed through the narrow space, when it again encountered the storm, and was seen no more. And thus it is with the life of man. For a little while, he wanders upon the earth, knowing nought of what happened before his birth, or shall happen after his death. Let us be instructed then in the new religion, that being

dens, ore quidem tacito, sed in intimis cordis multa secum colloquens, quid sibi esset faciendum, quæ religio servanda, tractabat."—*Id. lib. ii. c. 9.*

made better acquainted with its nature, we may straightway embrace it."

The dispositions thus expressed were found sincere. Coifi himself, the high-priest, destroyed the temple, and the idols which had so long been the objects of his ignorant veneration. A vast number of the people were soon after converted by the preaching of Paulinus. In a short space of time, the whole of the little kingdom owned the gospel; and the interests of Christianity spread with the successes of Edwin. To the great grief of his subjects, he fell in a battle against the combined forces of the Britons and Mercians. This event checked the progress of Christianity in the northern parts of England. Paulinus found himself constrained to return into Kent; and the see of Rochester falling vacant just about this time, he was immediately appointed to that bishopric. A new bishop having arrived in Northumberland from Scotland, and Edwin's successors submitting themselves to his instruction, it was not long before the affairs of the church revived. Aidan, the venerable missionary, sent in such a timely manner to the relief of the northern Christians, was in every way fitted for his office. His charity and humility were equally remarkable. The same may be said of his zeal, and his love of the divine word. Wherever he might be, whether at home or abroad, he always spent some portion of the day in the study of Scripture. That which he did himself, he expected his clergy to do; and we hence learn, as in the case of St. Patrick, that the devout reading of the Bible formed, in those early times, one of the chief employments of well-instructed believers.

Oswald, in whose reign Aidan laboured so zealously and effectually, was a prince of great virtue. The devout

feeling with which he listened to the instructions of the pious bishop may be understood from an anecdote, related as illustrative of his charity to the poor. One Easter-day, as he and Aidan sat at table together, and the first part of the repast having been brought in on a splendid silver dish; they were just about to say the customary prayer of blessing, when the servants announced that a great number of necessitous persons were standing at the door, asking for food. The king, on hearing this, instantly ordered the attendants to take back the costly viands which had been placed before him, and divide them among the poor. Not satisfied with this, he further directed that they should break up the dish itself into as many pieces as there were mendicants, and give one to each. Whatever we may think of the mode in which the benevolent monarch manifested his charity, it was a sufficient proof of the warmth of his heart, and of the deep impression which had been made upon it by the lessons which he had heard from the gospel and its teachers. Happily for the country, his ability in governing, and the success of his measures, were equal to his charity. In a few years he had gained possession of many of the fairest provinces of England; and even where he did not strictly exercise his sway, his influence was sufficiently great to secure a ready obedience to his wishes. Even the Britons, the Picts, and Scots, formed the strictest alliances with him; and Christianity daily acquired a firmer hold both of the people and the nobles.

In East-Anglia, the cause of religion was nobly furthered by Sigebert, the king of that part of the country. He had spent many years in France, and while he had himself acquired a considerable stock of learning, he had become strongly convinced of the importance of education

as a means of good to mankind at large. Acting according to these enlightened views, he laid the foundation, it is said, of the University of Cambridge, providing for the youths who frequented the school thus instituted, the best and most pious instructors the age could afford. But Sigebert, unhappily for his dominions, and the interests of religion, was not contented with these exertions in its behalf. He yielded to the growing taste for monastic retirement.* Instead, therefore, of continuing to show his piety by the virtues of a wise and good king, he resigned his royal power into the hands of his relation, Ecgric, and assumed the habit of a monk. Not long after his retirement, East-Anglia was invaded by the Mercians. Sigebert was entreated to leave his monastery, and render his former subjects the aid of his well-known military genius and experience. But he refused. A monk, he pleaded, could not clad himself in armour, or take the sword. "Then come without," was the rejoinder. "Let but the enemy know you are present, and he will tremble before an army guided by your counsels." Allowing himself to be dragged from his cell, Sigebert appeared on the field of battle, in the simple dress of a monk, and resting on a staff. But the Mercian leaders were not awed, as had been expected, by his presence. They urged forward their bands; Sigebert fell mortally wounded on the field; and almost the whole of the East-Anglian army, with Ecgric at its head, was cut to pieces by the Mercians.

These wars between the petty kings, among whom the

* Sigebertus, ubi regno potitus est, mox ea quæ in Gallis bene disposita vidit, imitari cupiens, instituit scholam, in qua pueri literis erudirentur, juvante se episcopo Felice, quem de Cantia accesserat, eisque pædagogos ac magistros, juxta morem Cantuariorum, præbente.—Beda, Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. c. 18.

country was divided, were alike injurious to the cause of civilization and the advancement of Christianity. It is the more worthy of admiration, therefore, that, amid so many obstacles, the gospel should have at length triumphed; and that, notwithstanding the fierce passions which ragèd among the yet half-untamed Saxons, some of the finest of the evangelical virtues should have taken root, as in a soil divinely prepared to receive them.

But, harmful as were the wars of rival princes,
A. D. and remarkable as it is, that the evils which
664. thence arose were prevented from being fatal to religion in England, the controversies which existed at this time threatened still worse results, and it is matter of greater wonder that they did not end in the speedy ruin of the infant church. The question as to the period when Easter should be kept had been agitated from the earliest times. It still remained a subject of dispute between the two great divisions of the universal church. In England, narrow as the stage was, the conflicts and troubles which had been witnessed in the church at large, were represented with characteristic violence. Augustine naturally taught his converts to observe the sacred festival according to the rule of the Western church; but the bishops of the old British church had followed, from time immemorial, the practice of the Eastern churches. While the one, therefore, celebrated Easter on the Sunday of the paschal week, whether the fourteenth day of the month or not, the other insisted on keeping literally to the legal institution of the passover, and, consequently, on celebrating Easter on the fourteenth of the month, though not the first day of the week, or Sunday, the day of our Lord's resurrection.

In times, when religious festivals were regarded with

an intensity and fervour of devotion, of which we can now scarcely form an idea, it was of real and practical importance that the different churches should be agreed, if possible, as to the season of observing them. In respect to Easter, connected as its ceremonies were with the humiliations and austerities of Lent, it was evidently necessary, both for the purposes of communion and edification, that those who stood in near Christian relation to each other, should be agreed as to the day of commemorating the resurrection. An instance of the inconvenience, and possible scandal, resulting from want of union on this subject, was afforded in the case of the Northumbrians. Oswi, who had succeeded Oswald in that kingdom, had married a daughter of the king of Kent. She had brought with her some of the clergy of her native province, and was zealously devoted to the rule and customs of her church. But a powerful party in Northumberland defended, with equal earnestness, the early British and Scottish doctrine on the subject of Easter. It hence happened that there were two parties in Oswi's court; and each being equally resolute in supporting its own views, Easter was twice celebrated in the course of a few days; and when the king, and the party which he favoured, were rejoicing in all the splendours of a festival, the queen, and her party were seen invested in mourning habits, and practising the rites of mortification.

In order to settle, if possible, the disputes which were continually excited by this state of things, a synod was held at Whitby. The conference was attended by several of the most influential men of both parties. Their arguments were such as had been advanced from the earliest times; the one party alleging the authority of St. John, the other that of St. Peter and the more general practice

of the church at large. The latter eventually prevailed ; and the custom of keeping Easter was accordingly ruled by the example of the Roman church.

However little value may be attached to the question thus debated, the conclusion arrived at was connected with matters of vast importance to religion in this country. The sentence which the synod gave in favour of the Roman doctrine fell heavily on the spirits of the clergy, who strove to support the old British traditions. One of the bishops present immediately resigned his see and retired into Scotland. It was felt that the early church would soon pass away, and leave its place to be occupied by another, if another it might be called, less independent, less pure from disturbing, or, perhaps, corrupting influences.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROMAN PONTIFFS—THEIR SHORT REIGN—STRUGGLES WITH
THE TEMPORAL POWER—MONOTHELITE CONTROVERSY.

THE death of Gregory the Great was acknowledged as a heavy affliction by the Roman people and clergy. During the whole of his pontificate, Italy had been the scene of oppression and tumult. The Lombards in confirming and extending their dominions, threatened to overwhelm the country with all the evils which attend the triumph of a barbarian conqueror. As Arians, they were prompted by religious hostility to pursue their conquests without regard to justice and mercy. They beheld in the faithful members of the Catholic church the declared enemies of their creed; and they contemplated the entire subjugation of Italy as the grandest object which could be accomplished for the promotion of their faith.

In the midst of the disorders to which the aggressions of this powerful enemy gave rise, the influence which Gregory enjoyed was the only source of hope to the distracted people. His piety was revered even by the fierce Lombards. The counsels which he gave the Romans in seasons of extreme danger obtained attention and respect, when those of other men would have been disregarded. The experience which he had acquired in his early intercourse with the world and with courts, taught him what course to pursue in the most difficult conjunctures; and thus by his reputation for sanctity

and by his real practical wisdom, he frequently warded off perils which threatened the cause of religion with grievous injury.

No successor was elected to this celebrated pontiff for more than five months. The dignity was then conferred upon the deacon Sabinian, who had been employed by Gregory as his legate at Constantinople. He reigned only about a year and a half, and the see was again left vacant for several months. Another deacon was then elected ; and it has been remarked by ecclesiastical historians, that a greater number of popes were chosen from among the deacons than from the superior orders. This is accounted for by the same writers, from the fact, that the deacons were more frequently employed than either priests or bishops in political offices. They had hence the opportunity of acquiring both influence and popularity ; of distinguishing themselves in the conduct of affairs ; and accomplishing designs of real importance to the interests of the church and people.

Like his predecessor, Boniface III. enjoyed his dignity but for a brief period, and another long interval succeeded before the election of a new pope. The annals of the see present little to interest posterity, except as they show the long and perilous struggle carried on both between the two great branches of the church in the East and West, and between the ecclesiastical and civil powers. Never was a more flagrant instance afforded of violence and oppression, than the conduct of the emperor Constantius towards Martin of Tuscany. Having been elected to the pontificate in 649, he was made prisoner by the emissaries of the emperor, in 653 ; dragged from the church in which he was officiating, and carried on board a vessel in which he was transported to Constantinople.

There, cast into prison, he suffered a treatment which could only have been deserved by the basest of malefactors ; and when at length he was taken from his dungeon, he was sent into the wildest district of the Chersonesus. Whether his death ought to be accounted a martyrdom or not may be disputed, but it is a melan'choly proof of the little regard which some of the emperors had for religion, when such a man as Martin could be thus treated because he would not submit to the tyrannical order which would have silenced the councils of his church, and obliged him to admit the decisions of a foreign synod, in place of the creed which had been happily preserved from apostolic times.

Several of the popes during the seventh century lived only one or two years after their elevation. Even this is a circumstance which ought not to be altogether lost sight of. Whether it was their age, their severe mode of living, or their labours, which thus cut short their enjoyment of the dignity, there can be little doubt but that, whatever the theory of pontifical rule, the ambitious aims of the church which they governed could be only very imperfectly promoted by men who held sway for such brief periods. The circumstance to which we have already alluded, namely, that the popes were more frequently chosen from among the deacons than from the other orders, indicates the early political tendency of the papal government. This may, perhaps, account for the unholy struggles which now began to take place between rival aspirants to the dignity. Thus, in the year 687, the archdeacon Paschal and the arch-priest Theodore, divided the people into two parties. At the period of the election, the one faction seized the interior of the Lateran palace, and the other, the surrounding courts of that edifice. After a

struggle which scandalized every Christian, a great body of the superior clergy, aided by the magistrates and the soldiery, proposed Sergius, a priest, as another candidate for the dignity. As no hope was entertained by either of the other parties of defeating its rival, they both gradually retired before the superior force of the new aspirant; and he was accordingly placed in the pontifical chair. His reign lasted near fourteen years; and during that period a struggle was carried on of great importance not to the Roman church merely, but to the independence of the church in all parts of the world.

Two main causes existed of the unhappy schism which was now dividing the members of Christ's mystical body, and destroying even the appearance of evangelical union. The one was the growing ambition of the bishops of the great sees, and patriarchates. The other was, the jealousy with which every species of church authority was contemplated by the Eastern emperors. To the great injury of religion itself, the spirit of controversy was still alive, and exerting its utmost power to employ the minds of churchmen, and men in general, on subjects which led their thoughts far away from the weightier themes of Christian truth and holiness.

The chief point of dispute in the present century, was that originated by the Monothelites. It began with Theodorus, bishop of Pharaa, a small city in Arabia Petraea. Yielding to his love of metaphysical subtleties, this prelate asserted, that the human and divine natures were so united in Christ, that the former, though endowed with all its proper characteristics, was wholly governed by the divine will, or that which resided in the word. This opinion was embraced by a powerful party in the Eastern church. Both Sergius, the patriarch of Constan-

tinople, and the emperor Heraclius, supported the views of Theodorus, and a sect was formed, the members of which were called Monothelites.*

But notwithstanding the high rank of those who endeavoured to establish this new doctrine, it was firmly opposed by a large portion of the clergy; and synod after synod was held in the vain hope of obtaining their assent to its introduction into the Catholic creed. The danger arising from the further discussion of so intricate a subject soon became apparent; and the emperor at length issued an ordinance, or *Ecthesis*, "An Exposition of the Faith," in which he prohibited any renewal of the controversy. This command, however, was strongly resisted not only in the East, but in the West. In 648, the emperor Constans published an ordinance, similar to that of his predecessor, but called *The Type*; and the next year Martin, of whose fate we have already spoken, held the synod at Rome, in which he asserted the right of the assembled clergy to declare their opinion on this subject, so important, he considered, to the purity of the faith.

In the first session of this council, Martin stated that his object in calling it "was to oppose the novelties and errors of Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria, and Sergius, bishop of Constantinople, and since defended by their successors: that eighteen years before this, Cyrus had published nine articles in Alexandria, pronouncing anathema against those who should not hold the opinion referred to, asserting, that there was but one operation in Christ, as well of his manhood as his Godhead: that Sergius had stated his approval of this doctrine, in a letter to Cyrus; and had confirmed it since, by publishing an heretical exposition of faith, under the name of the emperor Heraclius."

* From two Greek words signifying a single will.

Having thus stated his reasons for calling the council, the pontiff added, "That it would follow from the doctrine spoken of, that there was but one will and one nature in Jesus Christ ; for that the fathers of the church acknowledged, that when there was but one operation, there was but one nature." In proof of this statement, he quotes the testimony of Basil, Cyril, and Leo, proving therefrom that the divine and human nature in our Lord has each its distinct operation. Sergius, he says, had opposed this orthodox doctrine ; and his successors had even done worse ; for that Paul had induced the emperor to publish a new Exposition of Faith, namely, the *Type*, which overthrew the doctrine of the fathers, by forbidding men to profess their belief in either one or two wills in Christ : that he had followed up this dangerous act of tyranny by others which showed his enmity to the Catholic church ; and that the complaints which had been made to him respecting these proceedings, had been treated with insulting contempt. "All these efforts to restore peace," added the pontiff, "having proved vain, he had called his brethren together, that, having produced and examined the writings of the heretics, and heard the charges brought against them, they might deliver their judgment for the confirmation of the faith, and the suppression of error "

Representatives not only of the churches in Italy, but of those in distant parts of the empire, were present on this occasion. The conclusion to which the assembly came was clear and satisfactory to the supporters of the primitive and orthodox doctrine ; but it is worthy of observation, that Martin's predecessor, Honorius, had admitted the opinion of the Monothelites, and that thus, in a very important point, two chiefs of the Roman church

were in direct opposition to each other. This was even urged against the representatives of the papal see in the council of Constantinople ; and Honorius was cited among the witnesses to the scriptural character of the heresy.

A. D. The schism between the Eastern and Western
678. churches being attended with the most' deplorable consequences, no friend of religion could contemplate the present state of things without alarm. Even in political respects, there was much to create apprehension ; and the emperor Constantinus Pogonatus summoned a council at Constantinople, for the purpose of discussing anew the points in dispute. The First session was held at the latter end of the year 680, and the last in the month of September of the following year. This council is considered as the sixth of those dignified by the title of Œcumenical, or general. It was attended by the emperor, who presided over its deliberations ; by the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch ; and by the representatives of Rome, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. The number of prelates who appeared in the earlier sessions, is said to have been only thirty or forty ; but in the later meetings there were present more than a hundred and sixty. With regard to the rank held by the several dignitaries, it is said, that the three legates of the pope were placed above all the other bishops ; that George, patriarch of Constantinople, sat next ; the representative of the patriarch of Alexandria occupying the third place ; and Macarius of Antioch, and the deputy from the patriarch of Jerusalem, the fourth and fifth. After these came the episcopal deputies from the synod of Rome ; and then those who represented the church of Ravenna.

Certain official documents having been read, the legates commenced the business of the assembly, by stating, that

the dispute which had occurred having arisen from the invention and publication of new doctrines, on the part of the patriarchs of Constantinople, some account was now required of the reasons upon which those doctrines were defended. Macarius, the bishop of Antioch, answered, in the name of his own church, and of that of Constantinople, "that they had invented no novelties; that they taught nothing but what they had learnt from the holy fathers, as expounded by Sergius, by Honorius, by Cyrus of Alexandria, and others; and that they were prepared to defend their opinions by an appeal to the general synods, to the authority of which they were ready to submit themselves."

The emperor desired Macarius to adduce the evidence to which he thus appealed. He accordingly turned to the acts of the council of Ephesus, and a passage was mentioned, in which St. Cyril, writing to Theodosius, spoke of Christ's will as omnipotent. Macarius argued from this expression, that there was but one will in Christ; but he was at once answered, that the will spoken of in the passage quoted from St. Cyril, was the will of the word only, and not the will of Christ, in his human as well as in his divine nature. On the other hand, the pope's legates afterwards cited an expression from St. Leo's epistle, in which he was supposed to speak of two wills and two operations. To this Macarius, in his turn, replied, that the passage could only be made to prove the existence of a *theandric*, or God-man operation, in Christ.

A very important letter from Agatho, the then pontiff, was read at the fourth session of the council. This document contained numerous proofs of the doctrine of the two wills, taken from the Scriptures and the fathers. Agatho, in speaking of his own church, asserts that, it

had never fallen into error or been depraved by heresy ; that fathers and synods had followed its decisions ; and that its chiefs had ever been ready to support their brethren in the faith.

The Roman synod also addressed a letter to the council. This epistle contained a confession of faith, asserting the existence of two operations and two wills in Christ, and condemning the contrary doctrine of the Monothelites. It was signed by twenty-five bishops, among whose names was that of Wilfrid, who subscribed the document as the representative of the bishops of England. Large collections of passages from the fathers were presented, on both sides, to the assembly ; and it is an interesting fact that the disputants, instead of taking the quotations as thus offered, insisted upon comparing them with the originals, preserved in the library of the patriarch of Constantinople. That dignitary himself engaged earnestly in this work ; and, in the eighth session, declared himself satisfied, that the doctrine of the Western church, respecting the two wills in Christ, was supported by Scripture, and the fathers. The same sentiment was expressed by the rest of the bishops, with some few exceptions. Among these was Macarius, who, on being asked to declare his opinion, replied, that he did not own the existence of either two wills or two operations in Christ, but of only one will and one operation, the divine-human.

Macarius now stood before the council in the light of a heretic, and was to be judged accordingly. He had drawn up a confession of faith ; and this was produced, to be examined by the assembly. Having declared his meaning as to the two natures in Christ, he observes, that it is the same *person* who acts and suffers ; that it is God acting and suffering by the manhood ; and according to his divine

will, which is the only will operating in Jesus Christ, it being impossible that there should be either two like, or two contrary, wills in the same person. In proof or illustration of this statement, he observes, that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we are made partakers of Christ's body and blood, which is not a man's flesh, but the quickening flesh of the *word*. Having declared that the sentiments contained in this and another formulary which he had drawn up, were those which he still professed, he added, that he would rather suffer himself to be torn in pieces, or cast into the sea, than own two wills or two operations in Jesus Christ. This was sufficient for the purposes of the council ; but it is stated, that when the testimonies which he had adduced were examined by the originals, they were found to be falsified or garbled ; and that this provoking the indignation of the patriarch, sentence of deposition was immediately pronounced against him.

After the inquiry had been carried on five or six months longer, the council considered itself prepared to draw up its definition of faith. As preparatory to its statement on the particular subject, for the discussion of which it had been convened, it 'acknowledged the acts of the five preceding councils, and then declared "that there are two natural *wills* and two operations in Jesus Christ, in one person, without division, without mixture, and without change : that these two *wills* are not contrary the one to the other, but that the human will follows the divine will, and is wholly subject to it."

Before separating, the assembled prelates dispatched a letter to the Roman pontiff. This curious document affords another of the numerous proofs afforded by the history of controversy, that, in the disputes of rival sects and churches

the interests and power of the papacy were generally greatly benefited. Thus the prelates at Constantinople now addressed Agatho as the first bishop of the universal church, and acknowledged that they had employed his letter to uproot the foundations of the new heresy. The additional influence which he had thus gained for his church could not but be acceptable to the pontiff; and the ambition which might have slumbered, or would probably never have assumed any distinct character, was roused and fostered, and rendered formidable, by the readiness with which, in times of difficulty, the clergy in other parts of the world appealed to Rome and submitted to its guidance. One drawback indeed there was to the complete satisfaction of the papal advocates. Among those whose memory was branded by the council with the mark of heresy, was pope Honorius. Had this circumstance been viewed by the acute reasoners of the times with all the logical force and ingenuity which they employed on abstract questions, a very formidable, if not impassable barrier would have been raised against many of the pretensions of later pontiffs.

At the close of the century, another council was
 A.D. held at Constantinople. It is usually known as
 698. the council *in Trullo*, from its having been held in an apartment of the imperial palace called *Trullus*; or as the *Quini-sextum*, because it was supplementary to the fifth and sixth general councils. The object for which it was convened was the improvement of discipline; and we accordingly find, that its canons were drawn up with an exclusive reference to the morals of the clergy and the people. Some of the articles inserted in these canons indicate a laxity of feeling, and, in many instances, a positive corruption of manners, which present to our

thoughts a vision of the church with nothing outwardly but the general character of its faith to assimilate it to the church of the apostolic or early ages.

As far as the remains of a published literature are concerned, little exists to give us a favourable idea of the learning or intellectual power of the seventh century. But we must not too absolutely conclude that, because there were few writers of eminence in these times, men of talent were wanting to the church. There was little temptation for them to engage in pursuits which could awaken no popular sympathy, and to which the agitated minds of the great and powerful could give no present attention. It was in synods and councils, in subtle disputes and anxious conferences, that great ability could now best display itself. Had we, therefore, any clear and ample record of the proceedings which took place in such meetings, there is little doubt but that we should find, even in the ages accounted dark, numberless traces of intellectual energy, of powerful sense, and extensive knowledge, the possessors of which deemed it better to employ all their endowments for the good of their own times, and in struggling against the evils which threatened them, than to hazard what was so precious on the chance of a distant reputation or usefulness.

Ample evidence exists of the rapid growth of all those superstitious dispositions which threw over this and the succeeding ages so thick a veil of error. Still, here and there, striking proofs are afforded of the strong hold which truth retained, even on the minds which were most exposed to the ruling influences of the times. Thus the instructions of St. Eligius, bishop of Noyon, in 646, are eminently practical, though mixed up with remarks which are as weak and superstitious. In speaking, for example,

on the subject of repentance, he says, "If you repent after a godly manner, and be steadfastly purposed and sincerely desirous to sin no more, you shall be truly reconciled to Jesus Christ, and by us, to whom He has committed the ministry of reconciliation. But if you be not in that disposition, do not flatter yourselves; do not deceive yourselves; for you cannot deceive God as you deceive men; and he who by offending Him is become his enemy, can no otherwise recover his friendship than by making Him satisfaction. Do not, however, look upon bishops as the authors of your reconciliation, but merely as the ministers of it. It is Jesus Christ who invisibly absolves and reconciles men to God. As for us, we discharge our ministry when we outwardly and visibly perform the ceremonies of reconciliation."

But how melancholy it is to contemplate, on the other hand, the flood of vain notions, of low, trifling tales with which some of the most popular instructors of the people were now filling all the ordinary channels of knowledge. Take, for example, the book of Joannes Moschus, both a priest and a monk, and who had spent a large portion of his life in visiting the most celebrated monasteries of the East. On his arrival at Rome, he gave an account of what he had seen and heard. Thus, among other things, he states, that a monk wishing to convince one of his brethren that there is no salvation out of the church, had shown him a number of heretics in a place full of fire and noisome reptiles. And, again, that a Catholic in the service of a heretic, having left the key of his chest with his master, the latter found a portion of the eucharistic bread which the servant had placed there in a napkin. While he was thinking of throwing it into the fire, he saw, to

his astonishment, that some crumbs which had fallen from it were bringing forth ears of corn.

It is plain, from the nature of these recitals, that a far more important object was contemplated in publishing them among the people than affording them amusement, or merely exciting devout feeling. They were evidently intended to insinuate among them a reverential belief in the opinions and practices, which it was the growing desire of the church to mingle with its older and purer doctrine. The plan pursued was eminently calculated to secure success. There was too little knowledge among the people to dispose them to inquiry; and they implicitly received whatever they heard from the lips of men bearing the religious habit. No sooner was it believed by the ministers of the church themselves, that whatever tended to the service of their order was both lawful and praiseworthy, than the most extravagant inventions were imposed upon the people. The dread of untruth being once overcome, there was nothing to repress enthusiasm on the one side, or fraud on the other. Hence in the course of a few years the minds of the people were accustomed to the wildest relations. Whatever new rite the clergy desired to establish, this or that preacher was sure to be able to defend its introduction by some miraculous story. But injurious as this was to religion, tending as it did to justify the most superstitious practices, the general effect upon the popular mind was an evil of greater magnitude. It now became a general habit to look for wonders. That which could not sufficiently interest the teacher to induce him to invent some strange narrative, was not likely to obtain the attention of his hearers. The consequence was, that the simple gospel, the plain truths and doctrines of religion, gradually lost their place

in common estimation. No miracle was wrought to prove the power of divine grace converting and sanctifying the sinner; no wonderful tale was told to show how the penitent believer is justified by his faith. Such great truths did not admit of this species of proof. They, therefore, ceased to be heard with any profound interest by the mass of the people. Every novelty, on the contrary, had its attendant series of wonders, and thus the disposition was created to look for the supernatural instead of the spiritual; to desire prodigies, however much their recurrence might interfere with the economy of truth and grace.

It is distressing to find how large a portion of the writings of the best men are filled with accounts of ceremonies, or with dissertations on their signification. To charge the authors of these works with the offence of sacrificing what they knew to be most valuable to men's souls to the vanity or interests of their order, as opposed to the former, would, in most instances, be uncharitable and unjust. The spirit of error was general, and exercised its power over every class of men. Something, it was felt, was needed to bring the world under the power of religion. The age, in all its main characteristics, was opposed to the simplicity of the gospel. While credulity grew bloated with success, faith declined; and the pious men who would willingly have suffered martyrdom for their religion, could not, with all their peculiar sanctity and heroism, believe in the sufficiency of divine grace, and its simplest mode of operation, for the salvation of souls.

While, therefore, charity itself, however tender, cannot but charge many of the clergy of these times with fraudulent ambition, there are names celebrated in the chronicles

of the middle ages which, though connected with the superstitions and errors of the church, can never fail to shine with the lustre of genuine piety. Such men as Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, in 668, and Columban of Ireland, had virtues which would have adorned the church in any age ; but they were also deeply imbued with the notions of their contemporaries ; and their writings, though inculcating the purest principles of holiness, abound with indications of a prevailing tendency to superstition and formalism. In the celebrated Penitentiary of Theodore the most minute rules are prescribed for every office and act of religion. This was to carry the principle of order to excess ; and the result was injurious to both freedom and earnestness of spirit, without which there can be no profitable devotion. The same may be said of Columban's rule, and indeed of all the technical theology or instructions of those times. Everything which thought could invent was prescribed for the worshipper ; and he was easily led to believe that if he literally fulfilled the injunctions so piously set down, he might fairly consider that he had done whatever was necessary to render his service perfect.

But the practices thus introduced and the notions by which they were favoured were not self-supported. An institution had been growing up, the influence of which greatly changed the relation of the church to the world. This was monasticism. Without its aid, the ecclesiastical peculiarities of the middle ages would either never have existed, or would soon have been swept away by the ordinary force of public events, or the still greater power of public opinion. But they found in monasticism both a cradle and a fortress. The church itself must ever stand too much exposed to the free winds of heaven, to the

assaults of human passion and inquiry, to be able long to foster what is false and vain. It must have some collateral institution to aid it, if such should unhappily be its object. It must have auxiliaries who are not subjected, like its ordinary ministers, to the questionings of the world, or the strong sympathies of human nature. Had the church in the middle ages been left to itself, the multitude of ceremonies by which its offices were burdened would have vanished as they came. The temper of the times favoured their introduction ; and the temper of an improving period would have abolished them. So also with many of the maxims of policy and government introduced about the same time. The church itself could not have continued to retain them against the natural opposition of the world ; but monasticism furnished it with other arguments, with other principles than those proper to its own constitution ; and with these it was able to defend whatever it had arrogated to itself, in the gloomiest period which the world has known since the establishment of Christianity.

CHAPTER XIX.

MONASTICISM — ITS RISE AND PROGRESS — ITS ABUSES — THE
REFORMATION EFFECTED BY BENEDICT — HIS ORDER.

THE first rudiments of a monastic institution were traced by the Christians who fled from the terrors of the Decian persecution. Taking up their abode in the desert, they found in the peace and safety of their solitude a tranquillity of soul, of which it would be difficult to form an idea without a similar experience of long distress and danger. The remarkable character of St. Antony gave a fresh charm to the institution in the eyes of fervent and imaginative men. They soon began to regard it as opening the surest path to perfection ; and before the end of the fourth century, Egypt, Syria, Armenia, and most of the provinces of Asia Minor, could boast of their communities of monks.

Had the later ascetics been content to follow the example of their predecessors, and merely spend their time in acts of simple devotion, and in the study of divine truth, the church, and religion in general, might have derived much benefit from their example and influence. Such men, it may be supposed, would have retained their love of the pure doctrines of the gospel unaffected by the changing opinions of the world. The severity of their lives, it might further be imagined, would have inclined them to oppose any vain refinement, or unnecessary ob-

servances in the worship of the church ; but when they became subject to the fanatical spirit which haunted so many of their class, their influence was of the worst character, and even the temporal power found it necessary to resist the progress of so dangerous an example. In the year 365 the emperor Valens established a law, by which those who embraced the ascetic life for the purpose of escaping the obligations of society were rendered liable to very severe punishments. The necessity of such a law became every day more evident. Mendicant orders were instituted ; and, to cover the enormities which they committed, they pretended to a species of spiritual freedom, which raised them above all the ordinary rules of conduct. Parents forsook their children, and husbands their wives, to join themselves to some one or the other of the new brotherhoods. The common virtues of social life seemed unworthy of cultivation when compared with the graces of monks and anchorites. Even the sacraments of the church were disregarded by some of the boldest of the fanatics ; and it is probable that the clergy were, at first, out of mere alarm, induced to adopt many of their novel opinions and practices, fearing that, if they did not, the people might be altogether carried away by the charm of monkish superstition.

Saint Basil, and some other of the most enlightened prelates of the fourth century, exercised their authority in correcting the abuses which came under their observation. They endeavoured, by instituting new rules for the government of monasteries, to convert the zeal and leisure of the monks into instruments of good. For some time, the improvements thus effected produced the best results. The monks became studious ; acquired extensive learning ; took upon themselves the charge of preserving the then

too little valued remains of antiquity, and thus became librarians for posterity, and the world at large.

Ambrose and Augustine effected for the monastic institutions in the West, that which Basil the Great had done for them in the East. Under the rules thus established ; such men as Vincentius Lirinensis, the famous author of the *Commonitorium*, a treatise against heresy, were formed ; and both the church and society would have had good reason to rejoice had any institution flourished which could have secured a succession of scholars so well prepared to uphold their most important interests.

But it was reserved for St. Benedict to accomplish all that which, from the nature of things, it was possible to effect for monastic institutions in the age when they arose. This celebrated founder of the order to which ecclesiastical literature is indebted for its greatest treasures, was born towards the end of the fifth century, near Nursia, in Italy. His family was illustrious and wealthy ; and he was sent, at an early age, to pursue his studies under the most celebrated masters in Rome. But the impressions which had been made upon his youthful mind, by divine truth ; the anxiety which he already felt to escape the pollutions of the world, and lead a life devoted to God, made him regard the scenes of dissipation which passed daily before his eyes with abhorrence and disgust.

Knowing, however, that it would be useless to complain of the distress which he felt on this account, he resolved to retire secretly into solitude. Taking advantage, therefore, of the absence of his attendant, he left Rome, and, pursuing the road which led into the most solitary part of the country, he at length reached a wild, rocky district, about forty miles from Rome, and there took up his abode in a cavern, hewn in the sides of a huge mountain.

The old chroniclers delight in describing the lonely life of the young anchoret. Entirely shut out as he was from intercourse with the world, he would probably soon have fallen a victim to his austere devotion, and disregard of all the means of sustenance, but for the kind offices of a monk from some neighbouring monastery. Having discovered his retreat, the good Romanus entered into discourse with him, and found so much to admire in his conversation, that he undertook to supply him regularly with the scant meal necessary for his support. In order to accomplish this, and still keep Benedict's abode secret, he was obliged to take a circuitous path up the mountain, and let down the basket which contained the food, from a jutting peak of the rock. Sometimes it was necessary to ring a little bell to summon Benedict from the neighbouring valley, or to rouse him from his trance-like reveries. Length of time, the endurance of fastings and watchings, made no change in his determination to separate himself finally from the world. The only alteration in his thoughts was that which arose from the feeling, that as he knew more of God himself, so he ought to be the more zealous in persuading others to seek and serve him. In the early part of his course, he was satisfied with desiring perfection for his own soul. As he continued to experience a deeper conviction of the power of holy thought, so he felt an increasing desire to be made an instrument for bringing those who had aspirations like his own, into the best and surest path of knowledge.

Three years had been passed in this solitude, when a priest, from some distant part of the country, visited Benedict, and informing him that it was the joyous season of Easter, when no one could lawfully fast, induced him to partake of the contents of his scrip.

From this time, Benedict appears to have occasionally left his retreat, to instruct the rude inhabitants of the district in the elements of religion.. At length, the monks of a monastery, not far off, having lost their abbot, compelled him to accept the vacant office. He is said to have warned them, that the discipline which he should deem it necessary to institute would little suit their ill-regulated dispositions. They, however, insisted on his becoming their abbot ; and Benedict, after a vain resistance, was installed as chief of the monastery.

But his prophecies were soon verified. The reiterated exhortations with which he pressed upon the brethren the duty of temperance ; of prayer and watchings ; his own severe example of a humble, self-denying conduct ; and the firmness with which he punished those who persevered in their unchristian practices, rendered him the most unpopular of abbots to the indolent and luxurious monks. Such was the height to which their dislike rapidly reached, that some of their number resolved to free themselves from the yoke to which they had become subject. They accordingly put poison into the goblet of wine which was placed before him on the occasion of some great festival. It was expected that, having blessed the wine, he would partake of it according to custom ; but just as he was raising it to his lips, the glass broke in his hands, and the poisoned beverage was spilt on the floor. Benedict appears to have had some intimation, whether by miracle or otherwise, that there was a design to destroy him. Calmly rising from his seat, he fixed his eyes, with an expression of mingled severity and sorrow, on those whom he suspected of the crime ; and rebuked them for their sin. He then reminded the brethren generally, that he had forewarned them of the disgusts which might attend the

introduction of a sterner discipline among them ; that he had but sought their happiness in endeavouring to render them more like the holy men of old : and that in refusing to be reformed, they were involving themselves in a state of guilt which must, sooner or later, be followed by consequences indescribably terrible.

Having spoken to this purport, Benedict immediately left the monastery, and wending his solitary way, again sought his old abode among the rocks which had first afforded him a shelter. In this retreat he spent many years ; but not in mere solitude, or in the enjoyment of a devotion confined only to himself. His virtues were now known to all the country round ; and men of real piety hastened to converse with him on subjects of religion. However imbued he might be, like his contemporaries generally, with some of the peculiar errors of his age, he seems to have had very clear ideas of the necessity of practical holiness ; of a pure submission to the will of God, and conformity to the example of the blessed Jesus.

Finding how much they advanced in knowledge by frequent intercourse with so sound an instructor, many of the persons who came to visit him built little huts for themselves in the neighbourhood ; and thus there was gradually formed a monastic community, which had all the elements of permanency, because it consisted of men who had voluntarily associated themselves together, for the simple object of religious improvement. We naturally regret in these days that mixture of vain notions as to the method of attaining to perfection in holiness, with what was so pious and solid in the groundwork of Benedict's views. But properly to estimate the character or his aims, and of the institutions which he established, we must compare them, not with those of a period of greater

light, but with those which belonged to his own, or the immediately preceding, age.

But the reputation which Benedict enjoyed enabled him to exercise an influence on the minds of the young, which tended materially to retard the progress of ignorance and error. 'Many of the greatest men in the country sent their children to reside in the neighbourhood of his cell, that they might receive his instructions. His calm and dignified sentiments ; his profound piety ; his knowledge of the human heart, and simple devotion to the interests of holiness, wrought powerfully on the affections of the youths admitted to his society. Whatever their future walk of life, his instructions furnished them with a valuable guide ; and even in the midst of the prevailing gloom, the knowledge of spiritual and moral obligations which he imparted, gave a certain degree of light to their path.

In the course of a few years, the number of persons who had gathered around Benedict was sufficiently great to oblige him to institute a regular system of discipline. The rules which he established answered, in strictness of character, to the severe and elevated views which he had formed of spiritual life. But however opposed to the loose and vicious dispositions of the common monastic bodies, they did not prevent the rapid increase of his order. Twelve societies were formed, each subjecting itself to the rule and direction of Benedict. After having laid the foundation of their usefulness and stability, he removed to Mount Cassino, in Campania, where he still further developed his views, and formed a system of discipline which, had it been observed, might have saved the monasticism of the middle ages from its worst corruptions.

The rules which Benedict instituted were arranged by him, and circulated, as the constitution of the extensive order which now honoured him as its founder. In the following abstract we shall meet with things strange to the calm, simple, and public spirit of our reformed faith and discipline. But as matter of history, it must not be forgotten, that Benedict, for the times in which he lived, was himself a reformer ; that, according to the light which he enjoyed, he opposed holy feeling, a virtuous severity, and desire for the glory of God, to the wickedness of the world, and the hypocrisy of pretended Christians ; and that, though he was far from rising superior to the dangerous notions which were daily gaining currency in the church, the moral tendency of his system was disturbed neither by ambition nor vanity.

Having distinguished the various sorts of monks, he lays down rules for the conduct of the abbots, placed at the head of monasteries. Then speaking of the punishments to be inflicted on any of the brethren who might be found guilty of crimes, he gives general directions for the management of the society. Thus he recommends obedience, silence, and humility, and fixes the hour for prayer and meditation. From the first of November to Easter, the brethren were to rise at two o'clock after midnight, and having finished the usual service, were to spend the remainder of the night in studying the book of Psalms, or in other profitable reading. Matins were to commence with the first dawn of day ; and the only change made in this arrangement was that which was rendered necessary by difference of season. The greater part of the day was spent in actual labour. Thus during the summer, the monks worked from six till ten, either in the fields, or at some other useful employment. They

then retired to study, and having performed the appointed noon-tide service, and dined, they passed a little time in silent meditation. Their labour was then recommenced, and they continued to work till evening. Nothing can better illustrate the practical character of Benedict's regulations, or his own freedom from the dangerous notion, that monks might look for aid from Christian charity, without any exertion of their own, than the permission which he gave them to abridge the time devoted to meditation, whenever more labour was necessary for their support. "If the poverty of the place," he says, "oblige the brethren to live on the produce of their grounds, let them not be afflicted thereat ; for then will they be truly monks, when they live by the labour of their own hands, as the fathers and apostles did."

Among other rules, he directs, "that the brethren should have all things in common ; and that all should be under the power of the abbot, and the care of the steward ; that in the distribution of things necessary for maintenance, no respect was to be had to the rank, but to the weakness, of the brethren. He also enjoins the brethren to serve in the kitchen and refectory by turns ; desiring that especial care should be taken of the infirm, of children, and old men ; and that provision should be made for the hospitable entertainment of strangers." Descending to further particulars, he leaves it to the abbot to supply the monks with garments proper to the temperature of the place in which the monastery is situated ; but he suggests that, under ordinary circumstances, it may be sufficient to give them a cowl, a tunic, and a scapulary. He desires the monks not to complain of the colour or coarseness of these habits ; but to be contented with such as are given them, and may be obtained in the district.

The directions contained in his rule for the admission of new monks are very severe and precise. When any one offered himself as a candidate he had to endure patiently the repulses of the porter, who, for four or five days, would refuse to admit him within the monastery. When at length he was permitted to pass under the gate, he was conducted to the apartment set apart for strangers, and where he was visited by one of the oldest of the brethren, and pressed with many unpalatable questions and commands. Supposing that he bore all this with patience and humility, he was permitted, if he chose, to enter the chamber of novices. There the rule of the order was read to him ; and he was subjected for six months to the rigours of a most stern preliminary discipline. At the end of this period the rule was to be again read to him, and if he still persevered in his desire to enter the order, he was proved for another four months ; at the close of which, if his patience, humility, and devotion endured the test, he was numbered among the members of the monastery.

As far as these directions concerned the admission of new monks, who could understand clearly the obligations which they were about to undertake, they were not stricter than the nature of the institution required. But we find that there were supplementary rules. The new monk, for example, if he had property, was to consign it over to the poor, or to the monastery which he was entering ; and parents might bring a young child, and make vows for him which would bind him to the order, and oblige him to give it whatever property he might inherit. Benedict himself was far too good and holy a man to form the notion of aggrandizing his institution at the expense of any social virtue ; but it requires little argument to prove,

that in these respects he prepared the way for some of the worst abuses of which any religious establishment could be made the instrument. These, however, were not seen in his time ; and the societies formed according to his rule were so superior to other monastic establishments, and offered so many advantages to those who wished to escape from the world, that such men as the celebrated statesman, Cassiodorus, rejoiced to rank themselves among the members of the order.

A comparatively short period only was required to render the Benedictine monks a very powerful body. They were found in all the great countries of Europe ; and their habits of study combined with the severity of their morals, obtained for them the general respect of the provinces in which they were established. Their original purity of manners did not continue for many generations ; but reformers arose from time to time in their own order, and of all the monastic brotherhoods existing either in early or later times, that of St. Benedict may be accounted the most worthily distinguished.

The growth of monasticism was accompanied by the gradual establishment of those principles which gave so peculiar a character to the church in the middle ages. It was from the discipline necessarily imposed on the monks, that the law of celibacy became binding on the clergy. It was from the practice, which became more and more frequent, of selecting the higher officers of the church from the monastic orders, that the mortifications, and other austerities, of outward religion, were multiplied as means of grace. Few of the great names known in ecclesiastical history are unconnected with monasticism. Both Athanasius and Augustine, the most influential of the fathers, appear to have derived many of the dis-

tinguishing qualities of their thought from the discipline of conventual life. It was not to be supposed that when they had long been submitted to the rule which separated them from all the ordinary ways of society, they could be raised to high stations in the church without urging the advantages of their solitary musings, or of their own stern habits upon believers generally. That a blessing may be looked for from retirement ; that Christian perfection can hardly be attained to without some exercise of a severe self-denial, few devout minds will refuse to acknowledge. The fact that such things (in a modified sense) are necessary to us all, if we would acquire that victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, in which our safety is to consist, gave an obvious force and importance to the arguments urged in favour of monastic severities. No one could deny that the mass of Christians were wanting in the likeness which they should have borne to their Saviour, because they would not take up the cross and follow him. When such men, therefore, as Athanasius, Augustine, and others of similar character, came forth from their solitudes, and were seen in the midst of the thoughtless and licentious world, still practising all the austerities of ascetic life ; and when it was further found that the result of such a course was wonderful clearness and elevation of spirit ; wonderful superiority to the temptations, to the mean, base vanities of the world, little surprise can be felt that an admiration was excited, which would lead devout minds to endeavour by similar means to reach a similar perfection.

But it was not in these respects only that the growth of the monkish orders influenced the state of the church. It was in the monastic cell that many of the subtle notions had their birth which afterwards assumed the cha-

racter of formidable heresies. Both Nestorius and Eutyches had passed the greater part of their lives in monastic seclusion. It was there that they had brooded on divine mysteries, till they had subjected them to their own forms of thought, and adapted them to the powers of their own expression. Nor was the Western church without similar examples of the disposition of monks to refine on the doctrines of religion, and stamp them with the character of their own minds. Cassian, whose name on this account must not be passed over, exercised as great an influence for a time, though not so permanently, as Benedict himself, in the promotion of monastic rules. But to him is attributed the origin of those semi-Pelagian doctrines, of those modified views on the subject of human corruption and the necessity of grace, which alarmed the followers of Augustine almost as much as Pelagianism itself.

Photius, in his account of Cassian's institutions for the government of monasteries, says: "They have in them something so powerful and divine that the houses in which they are observed flourish, and afford eminent proofs of holiness and virtue, while those which reject them are little distant from ruin. And, indeed, of all the systems invented for the guidance and instruction of monks, none, in my judgment, can be considered more useful, or spiritual, or tending more to perfection and true devotion. Cassian meddles not with actions and observances of little importance. He insists upon substantials and the great ends of a monastic life. Hence he exhibits the virtues which it ought to foster, and the temptations to which it is mainly exposed. He never delivers his own mere private thoughts and imaginations on the subject, but makes observations, and delivers rules

and maxims taken out of holy Scripture, and supported by innumerable holy testimonies."

But St. Prosper, it is remarked, discovered in this very book, which formed the chief rule of the monasteries in the south of France, the seeds of heresy. Augustine's reasonings on free-will and grace, were regarded, it is well known, by many of the French clergy as not wholly in harmony with other doctrines of Scripture. Their supposed error in this respect was ascribed to Cassian; and the influence which his opinions exercised has been traced in the state of a portion of the British churches as late as the seventh century.

Generally, however, the monks were zealous advocates of orthodoxy. Thus Cassian himself wrote very powerfully against Nestorianism, and assailed its author with equal eloquence and fervour. "Were you," he said, "an Arian or a Sabellian, and I could not use your own creed against you, I would confute you by the authority of Scripture testimonies; by the word of the law; and by that of the faith acknowledged throughout the world. I would tell you, that whatever your own state of mind, you ought not to resist the common consent of mankind; and that it is unreasonable to prefer the opinions of some few individuals to the faith of the church at large; that faith, which having been taught by Christ himself, and preached by his apostles, ought doubtless to be received as the word and law of God. If I should deal with you thus, what would be your answer? Your only hope of evasion would lie in the possibility of your replying, 'I was not brought up in this faith. I was not so instructed; my parents, my masters taught me otherwise. I have another doctrine in my church; I have learnt another creed. Into this other creed I was baptized, and I live in

the faith of which I then made profession.' You would think that by thus speaking you had uttered a powerful argument in defence of your error. But you were born in an orthodox city ; you were instructed from the first in the Catholic faith ; you were baptized with a true baptism ; and we must not deal with you as with an Arian or a Sabellian. By the faith of the creed which you originally professed you gained admittance to baptism ; by that you were regenerated ; and in virtue of the same faith you have been made a partaker of the eucharist. Still further, and with sorrow I speak it, the same holy faith raised you to the ministry, made you a deacon and priest, and exalted you to the dignity of a bishop. And what has been your course ? What is the condition to which you have brought yourself ? By losing the faith of the orthodox creed you have lost all. The sacraments of your priesthood and episcopacy are grounded upon the truth of the creed."

Before the end of the seventh century, monasticism was so generally established, that, had it not been from the mere necessity of their union, the institutions in which its principles were embodied would have risen as bold and active rivals of the church. The tendency of monasticism to become an independent power was early seen. Monks, as such, not belonging to any order of the clergy, claimed an exemption from the government of the bishops. But they were engaged in the performance of many holy offices ; they read the Scriptures ; they preached ; and the people could not fail to look upon them as peculiarly fitted by their reputed virtues to lead them in the ways of holiness. Thus the regular ministers of the church often found themselves compared, to their disadvantage, with the enthusiastic ascetics ; and could the latter have

discovered even the shadow of a pretence for such a usurpation, there can be little doubt but that in the dark ages the whole power of the clergy would have been transferred to their hands.

The feeling of rivalry which was hence created, gave rise, on the part of the bishops, to occasional acts of authority which provoked a determined resistance on the side of the monks. In Africa, recourse was had to the following expedient. It had been especially directed by one of the canons, passed at the council of Chalcedon, that the members of the different monastic establishments should be under the bishops of the dioceses, in which they were situated. The bishops accordingly insisted upon a strict attention to such rules as they thought fit to introduce for the regulation of the convents. Whatever might be the nature of these rules, the monks considered their introduction as a violation of the proper independence of their order. In the council, therefore, which was held at Carthage, in the year 525, the abbot and monks of one of the African monasteries, made a formal appeal to the assembly against the oppressive conduct of Liberatus, bishop of the province of Byracena. The abbot, in his address to the council, pleaded, that the monastery which he governed had never been subjected by law to any bishop but the bishop of Carthage; that while there were bishops of that see, they had readily consulted them on all matters of difficulty, and that without any sacrifice of their own proper independence; that as Carthage had now again a bishop, they desired to be placed under his guardianship, and to be set free from the yoke with which others had attempted to oppress them. In justification of this his desire to place his monastery under the care of the bishop of another and a distant diocese, the abbot

urged the example of many other religious houses, which were subject not to the bishops of the provinces in which they were situated, but to those of other dioceses.

There is good reason to believe, that the decision of the council was in favour of the monks, and that a decree was passed, which either rendered them wholly independent of episcopal government, or gave them liberty to choose the prelate under whom they desired to be placed. Which ever was the case, the African monastic orders acquired by this decision a degree of liberty, which endangered not merely the fair authority of the bishops, but the whole discipline of the church. Had the monks been confined to their monasteries ; had they possessed no means of influencing the opinions of the people, or gaining power and wealth, they might have been safely left to themselves ; but the contrary of all this was the case ; and it is hence of great importance to the reader of church history, to observe the progress made by the monastic institutions of different ages, and the relation in which they stood to the whole body of the church.

In the West, though not emancipated from the power of the bishops, the monkish orders were so hedged round by laws passed in their favour, that they were generally able to defy the attempts of any ambitious prelate against them. For this they were mainly indebted to Gregory the Great ; and his example was followed by many of his successors, who saw that in return for the privileges which they conferred upon the religious orders, they obtained a share of that vast influence which they were daily acquiring among the great body of the people.

While such was the growth of different parties in the church, and such its general outward circumstances, events were taking place which threatened the world with sub-

jection to a yoke rendered ten-fold more formidable by its contrast with that of the gospel.

A. D. 611. Mahomet appeared in Arabia in the early part of the seventh century. He was descended from a family which had long enjoyed the high religious privilege of being charged with the guardianship of the Kaaba, or sacred books of the Arabs. Both the Old and New Testaments are said to have been familiar to him from youth ; and his mind early conceived the daring and impious idea of converting them to the purposes of his own ambition. The state of his countrymen was favourable to any attempt of this kind ; and he had all the qualities necessary to secure success. At the beginning of his course, he could number only four disciples, and they were his wife, his cousin Ali, his slave, and his devoted friend, Aboubeker. Five others were subsequently added to these ; but he allowed four years to pass before he appeared openly in the character of a prophet. The beginning of his career was attended with numerous perils. His bold pretensions excited the contempt of some, and the hatred of others. One of his most determined rivals had resolved upon his destruction, and it was only by a timely flight to Medina, that he saved himself from his dagger.

Such, however, was the fascination of the language which he employed, and of the glowing images with which he filled the minds of his hearers, that he soon found himself surrounded by a sufficient number of followers to enable him to assail Mecca, and take it by force. This at once placed him in a position for attempting greater things ; and he now unfolded the whole system which he was preparing to publish, and force upon the trembling world by fire and sword.

The system which was thus to wait upon the steps of the conqueror, was formed of materials collected from all the known religions then existing. It contained a confession of the unity of God : it owned the divine election of Noah, Abraham, and Moses ; and while its author spoke with corresponding reverence of the whole line of prophets acknowledged by the Jews, he openly declared that Jesus, the son of Mary, was the greatest of all ; that he was miraculously conceived ; that he was the Messiah, the Word, the Spirit of God. The Jews, he added, thought to destroy him, but he was saved by divine interposition. Of the Scriptures, he said, that the law of Moses, and the gospels, are inspired books, but that men have abused the grace of God, and altered them to suit their own purposes. "It is hence," he continued, "that God has sent me to instruct the people of Arabia. Worship him then, and attribute nothing to his nature which is unworthy of his glory and perfections. Confess Mahomet to be his prophet ; believe in the resurrection ; in a universal judgment ; in the existence of a hell, where the wicked shall suffer everlasting burnings ; and in that of a paradise, a rich and lovely garden, watered by living streams, where the good shall enjoy for ever all the pleasures of sense."

Having taught his followers what they must believe, he next instructed them as to the worship which they were to practise. Idolatry had corrupted and debased his countrymen. The severest denunciations, therefore, were pronounced against those who should be guilty of this sin. Prayer, on the contrary, was to be reverentially offered up to the one true God. The offices of devotion were to be performed, with great exactness, five times a day ; and purity, both outward and inward, was represented as essential to the efficacy of devotion. Among the particular

laws which he established, were those which prescribed abstinence from wine, from blood, and from swine's flesh. There were also directions respecting days of fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimages to Mecca. He instituted the payment of tithes; commanded believers to take arms for the defence of the faith; and promised paradise to those who should fall in battle. One of the main doctrines of his system exhibited the belief in predestination in its severest forms; and he solemnly taught his followers to submit themselves, in all things, to the eternal will of God.

The laws and instructions which Mahomet thus prepared for the multitudes, who now owned him as a prophet, were published at different times, and then collected into the volume to which he gave the general name of Al-Koran. Acting with the same daring spirit of imposture in this respect, as in the other parts of his course, he pretended that the substance of this book was dictated to him by the angel Gabriel; and there were particular seasons in which he fell into ecstasies, and was supposed to be in communion with heaven.

However wild the character of the imaginary revelations with which Mahomet filled the minds of his followers, they were well adapted to the purpose which he sought to accomplish. The Arabs were rude, unlettered, and superstitious. They were ardent and imaginative, but stern and serious. Mahomet himself, it is said, could neither read nor write; but he had means, more powerful even than those of letters, for the times in which he lived, by which to accomplish his designs. The ministers of the Koran were daring warriors; prophets who knew that they could fulfil their predictions by their swords; and in a few years, almost the whole of Arabia, with several adjoining provinces, owned the sway of their chief.

Mahomet, who died in 631, was succeeded by his faithful friend and constant companion, Aboubeker. He resumed the title of Calif, or vicar, intending to describe himself thereby, as the representative of this prophet. His reign continued only two years; but during that period he exhibited such moderation, such temperance and justice, that he greatly extended the influence of his faith, and was enabled, by the enthusiasm of his followers, to enlarge his dominions far beyond their original borders. Omar, who succeeded him, was still more successful, and no less distinguished for his moral virtues. Following the example of Aboubeker, he every Wednesday distributed among the poor whatever the public treasury contained, not required by the emergencies of the state. During his reign, which lasted ten years, Persia, Egypt, and Syria were brought under his sway. Jerusalem opened its gates to his victorious hosts, and he entered the sacred city with every manifestation of awe and devotion. His mercy to the inhabitants was as conspicuous as his appearance of piety. He commanded his soldiers to spare their persons, their possessions, and their churches. Exhibiting his reverence for Christian tradition, he visited Bethlehém, and offered up prayers in the grotto pointed out as the birth-place of Jesus Christ. The splendid mosque on the site of Solomon's temple was erected at his expense; and the fame of Jerusalem thenceforth became as precious in the eyes of the followers of Mahomet, as in those of the Jew or the Christian.

The extension of the Mussulman empire was now as rapid as the loftiest imagination of its founder could have taught him to expect. In the year 638, the splendid city of Antioch fell into the hands of Omar; and the

following year, his armies took Edessa, and the whole of Mesopotamia. It was impossible for the Christian powers to behold the spread of such an empire without equal awe and alarm. The humblest believer in the gospel regarded the triumph of a false prophet, and the establishment of his reign, as a solemn chastisement inflicted on the pride and negligence of Christendom. New provisions for defence were rendered necessary. Men's minds were strangely excited by the dread of seeing the world overrun by the infidel; and the vague terrors thus awakened gave a fresh impulse to the onward course of superstition.

The growth of monasticism, on the one side, and of Mahometanism on the other, must be regarded as essentially influencing the religious character of the middle ages. They turned the thoughts of men out of their natural course; and it was not till other, and equally powerful, agents had begun to exercise their might on the hopes and fears of the world, that they lost any of the predominating force which marked their early reign.

CHAPTER XX.

DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST—EUCHARISTIC RITES AND CEREMONIES—OTHER RITUAL OBSERVANCES.

It was in the seventh century, that the rites of the church began to exhibit the most striking evidence of a definite change in the tone and spirit of popular religion. By far the most important of the ceremonies introduced into the service of the church, were those which belonged to the celebration of the Eucharist. The peculiar sacredness of that sacrament ; the sublime associations with which it is connected, and the blessings arising from a faithful communion thereby with Christ and his people, have ever tended to render it in the eyes of believers the most glorious, as well as the most venerable, of institutions.

The oldest ecclesiastical writers speak of the Eucharist, as they love to call it, in terms of mysterious admiration. Such words as *oblation* and *sacrifice* show how closely they connected the symbol with the reality, and how little more of fervent feeling was needed to obscure altogether the important distinction between the outward sign, and the inward grace. But it was not till the third century, that the elements placed on the Lord's table were regarded as constituting the substance of a sacrificial offering ; and no sufficient evidence, therefore, can be found of their being viewed in the light of objects to be worshipped. Tertullian mentions, that in his time it

greatly distressed pious attendants at the communion, if any of the bread or wine employed fell to the ground.* Origen uses stronger language, and says, that care was taken by those who celebrated the divine mysteries not to let a particle of the consecrated gift fall, especially no portion of the Lord's body. He praises this reverential fear of the communicants, but draws the inference, that, while they preserve the body of Jesus Christ with so much care and veneration, they ought not to imagine, that there is less guilt incurred in treating the word of God with disrespect, than there would be if they disregarded his body.

Controversialists have shown, that no conclusion can be drawn from the expressions thus employed, to prove, that the ancients adored the sacramental elements ; but though this may be the case, it is impossible fairly to deny, that the language here introduced implies the existence of a feeling akin to that which is known to have prevailed in later times.

About the middle of the fourth century, the custom was introduced of carrying about the sacrament in public processions. These solemnities indicate another step in the progress of that reverence for the visible elements of the rite, which was destined to produce such important effects. Expressions now begin to be found in the writings of some of the fathers, which show how profound was the feeling of awe which they felt on approaching the sacrament ; and how disposed they were to admit the introduction of any rite, which might promote the sentiments with which they were thus inspired. There is a seeming inconsistency, indeed, in what some of the most

* De Coronâ, c. iii

pious and eminent men say on the subject. But the tendency of their minds was, in many respects, towards the adoption of views, which, apparently, at least, harmonize more with the middle, than with the apostolic, age of the church.

The most striking of the passages, from the fathers, appealed to in illustration of this subject, and that by opposing controversialists, are the following. First, Gregory of Nyssen, in his treatise on baptism, says, "This altar before which we stand, is but common stone in its nature, differing nothing from other stones wherewith our walls are built ; but after it is consecrated to the service of God, and has received a benediction, it is a holy table, an immaculate altar, not to be touched by any but by the priests, and that with the greatest reverence. The bread also at first is but common bread ; but when once it is sanctified by the holy mystery, it is made and called, the body of Christ. So the mystical oil, and so the wine, though they be things of little value before the benediction, will, after their sanctification by the Spirit, accomplish wonders. The same power of the word makes a priest honourable and venerable, separated as he thus is by a new benediction, from the mass of mankind. For he who before was only one of the common people, is now made a ruler and overseer ; a teacher of piety, and a minister of the holy mysteries. And all these things he becomes, without any change in his body, or shape ; for to all outward appearance, he is the same that he was ; the change being in his invisible soul, and wrought by an invisible power and grace."*

In a similar manner, Cyril of Jerusalem, says, "Beware

* De Baptis. Christ. t. iii. p. 369.

that you take not this ointment to be mere ointment. For as the bread in the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is not mere bread, but the body of Christ, so this holy ointment, after invocation, is not bare or common ointment, but is the gift, or grace of Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who by his presence and divine nature renders it efficacious ; and in such a way, that while the body is anointed symbolically with the visible ointment, the soul is sanctified by the holy and quickening spirit.”*

Still more famous is the passage from St. Chrysostom's epistle to Cæsarius, in which he says, “ As the bread before it is sanctified, is called bread, but after the divine grace has sanctified it, by the mediation of the priest, ceases to be called bread, but is dignified with the name of the body of the Lord, though the nature of bread remain in it, and they are not said to be two, but one body of the Son ; so here, the divine nature residing or dwelling, in the human body, they both together make one Son, and one person.”

Theodoret used these remarkable expressions : “ Our Saviour would have those who are partakers of the divine mysteries, not to regard the nature of the things which they see, but, by the change of names, to believe that change which is wrought by grace. For he that called his own natural body, *wheat*, and *bread*, and gave it the name of a *vine*, honoured also the visible symbols, or elements, with the name of his body and blood, not changing their nature, but adding grace to nature.” A Eutychian having argued, that, “ As the symbols of the Lord's body and blood are one thing before the invocation of the priest, and another after, so the body of our Lord

* Cyril. Catech. Myst. III. p. 3.

after its assumption, was changed into the divine substance ;” Theodoret answered, “Thou art taken in thine own net ; for the mystical symbols do not lose their own nature after consecration, but retain their former substance, figure, and form, and are visible and palpable, as they weré before. And yet they are understood and believed to be what they are made, and are revered as those things which they are made. Compare, therefore, the image with the original, and thou shalt see their likeness. For the type must answer to the truth. That body has the same form and figure, and circumscription, and, in a word, has the same substance of a body which it had before ; but it is immortal after the resurrection, and is freed from all corruption, and sits at God’s right hand, and is adored by every creature, as being called the body of the Lord of nature.”*

The next author quoted is Ephrem, who was bishop of Antioch, about the middle of the sixth century. He says, “No man that hath any reason will assert, that the nature of palpable and impalpable, of visible and invisible, is the same. For so the body of Christ, which is received by the faithful, does not leave its own sensible substance, and yet is united to a spiritual grace. And so baptism, though it becomes wholly a spiritual thing, and but one thing, yet it preserves the property of its sensible substance, that is, water, and does not cease to be what it was before.”†

These quotations are sufficient to show what were the views of the Greek fathers on the subject of the sacra-

* Theod. Dialog. I., Op. t. iv. p. 17. See Cosin’s Hist. of Transubstan. p. 77.

† Ephrem ad Photium, Cod. 229.

ments, and symbolical usages in general. The Latin fathers employ language of a similar tendency ; and Tertullian is expressly cited as saying, " We are not to call in question these senses of ours, lest we begin to doubt of the certainty of the very things that are related of Christ ; whether He was not deceived when He saw Satan fall from heaven ; or, when He heard the Father's voice, testifying of Him ; or, when He touched the hand of Peter's mother ; or was conscious of the smell of the ointment which He accepted for his burial, or when He tasted the wine which he consecrated to be the memorial of his blood. St. John argues upon the testimony of our senses, ' which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life.'*" But this attestation is false, if our senses may be deceived as to the nature of things which we see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and touch with our hands."†

Augustine, as reported by Fulgentius, expresses himself similarly on the same subject. Addressing those of his hearers who had been lately baptized, and were now preparing to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist, he reminds them that what they saw upon the altar was bread, and the cup, as their own eyes could testify ; but that what their faith required to be instructed in was this, namely, that the bread is the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ. " But," he continues, " the thought

* 1 John, i. 1.

† Tertullian, de Anima. c. xvii. " Sic enim et Marcion phantasma eum maluit credere, totius corporis in illo dedignatus veritatem. Atquin ne in Apostolis quidem ejus ludificata natura est. Fidelis fuit et visus, et auditus in monte : fidelis et gustus vini illius, licet aquæ ante, in nuptiis Galilææ : fidelis et tactus exinde creduli Thomæ."

will probably arise in your hearts, 'Christ took his body into heaven, whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead ; and there He now sits at the right hand of God. How then is the bread his body ? Or how is the cup, or that which is contained in the cup, his blood ?' These things are called sacraments, because in them one thing is seen, and another is understood. That which is seen has a bodily appearance ; that which is understood, has a spiritual fruit. If, therefore, you would understand the body of Christ, hear what the apostle says to the faithful : 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' Your mystery, or sacrament, is laid upon the Lord's table. You receive the sacrament of the Lord. You answer, *Amen* to what you are, and by that answer subscribe to the truth of it. You hear the minister say to you, *The body of Christ*, and you answer, *Amen*. Be members of the body of Christ, that your *amen* may be true."

Augustine then supposes the question asked, "Why is this mystery in bread ?" And he replies, "Let us here bring nothing of our own, but again hearken to the apostle. When he speaks of this sacrament, he says, 'We being many, are one bread. and one body.' Understand and rejoice. We being many are unity, piety, truth, and charity ; *one bread and one body.*"

The next author quoted is the Roman pontiff Gelasius. He lived towards the close of the fifth century, and was one of the most strenuous opponents of the heresies, with which the subtle spirits of the Greek church were troubling believers. He says, "Doubtless the sacraments of the body and blood of Christ which we receive, are a divine thing ; and, therefore, by them we are made partakers of the divine nature, and yet the substance and

nature of bread and wine do not cease to be in them.* And, indeed, the image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ is celebrated in the mysterious action. By this, therefore, it is evidently proved, that we are to believe the same thing in our Lord Christ, as we profess and celebrate, and take in his image. That as by the perfecting virtue of the Holy Ghost, the elements pass into a divine substance, while their nature still remains in its own propriety; so in that principal mystery, (the union of the divine and human nature,) whose efficacy and power they represent, there remains one true and perfect Christ, both natures, of which he consists, retaining their properties unchanged."

Still more remarkable is the language of Facundus, an African bishop, who lived in the middle of the sixth century. "The sacrament of adoption," he says, "may be called adoption, as we call the sacrament of our Lord's body and blood, which is in the consecrated bread and cup, his body and blood, not because the bread is properly his body, or the cup his blood, but because they contain the mystery of his body and blood. Whence our Saviour, when He blessed the bread and cup, and gave them to his disciples, called them his body and blood."†

Still carrying on the line of witnesses to the doctrine of the early church on this important matter, we have

* "Et tamen esse non desinit substantia vel natura panis et vini."—Gelas. de Duabus natur. Bib. Pat. t. iv. p. 422.

† "Potest sacramentum adoptionis adoptio nuncupari, sicut sacramentum corporis et sanguinis ejus; quod est in pane et poculo consecrato, corpus ejus et sanguinem dicimus, non quod proprie corpus ejus sit panis et poculum sanguis, sed quod in se mysterium corporis sanguinisque contineant. Hinc et ipse Dominus benedictum panem et calicem, quem discipulis tradidit, corpus et sanguinem suum vocavit."—Facund. lib. ix., c. 5, ap. Bing.

the statement of Isidore, bishop of Seville, about the year 630. In a work on the rites of the church, he says, "The bread, because it nourishes and strengthens our bodies, is called the body of Christ; and the wine, because it creates blood in our flesh, is called the blood of Christ. Now these two things are visible; but being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, they become the sacraments of the Lord's body."*

Had the fathers generally expressed themselves with the same clearness on the subject as those here quoted, the controversy respecting the real presence would probably never have existed. But the fervour of some, and the loose indefinite mode of expression adopted by others, give too much support to arguments of a contrary tendency. It appears, however, that, with all the intense feeling and imaginativeness of the earlier ages, the veneration entertained for the Eucharist never led to the worship of the visible elements of the mystery. This subject has been investigated with profound attention and learning; and even Roman Catholic writers of eminence, especially Cardinal Bona, confess that the adoration of the sacrament cannot be proved by any clear testimony of the fathers. The first notice of this practice, allowed on all sides to be sufficiently decisive, is that contained in the decree of Odo of Paris, who ordained that the people should be frequently exhorted to bend the knee to the sacrament, whenever they saw it pass, as to their Creator and their Lord. Honorius, who was elevated to the pontificate in 1216, directed the priests to teach the

* "Panis quia confirmat corpus, ideo Christi corpus nuncupatur, vinum autem, quia sanguinem operatur in carne, ideo ad sanguinem Christi refertur."—De Eccles. Offic. lib. i. c. 18.

people that when the elevation of the host took place, in the service of the mass, they should bend the knee ; and do so also, when the sacrament was carried to the sick. Ten or twelve years after this, Gregory IX. introduced the practice of sounding a bell when the host was elevated, that all those who heard it might fall on their knees, and, joining their hands, adore the Lord.

But though the practices alluded to may not be spoken of in the early ecclesiastical writers, or may, in reality, not have existed in the bold, startling forms which they afterwards assumed, it is plain, from the nature of things, that if they are described as in their full splendour, in the twelfth century, or at the beginning of the thirteenth, they must have taken root in the minds of the people long before this period. So remarkable a class of rites and ceremonies as those belonging to the adoration of Christ's body and blood on the altar, could not have been suddenly introduced. They would have startled the most unenlightened of believers into curious or anxious inquiry ; and the clergy would have been everywhere employed, not in performing the service with unquestioning devotion, but in justifying and defending their novel ceremonies. We do not, however, find that any difficulty attended the multiplying of those rites by which the mystery of the real presence was to be exhibited. When it became a subject of controversy, the wisest and most spiritual of scholars reasoned in vain. The belief was too generally and deeply rooted in the minds of the people to be weakened by any arguments, however scriptural or profound.

Instead, therefore, of supposing that the reasonings of the great men quoted above were sufficient to preserve the church from error on this subject, we have cause to

believe, that the tendencies of the popular creed, from the end of the fourth century up to the tenth, when unresisted darkness prevailed, strongly favoured the worship of the sacramental elements. It is not difficult to explain how these tendencies arose. The gospel is too pure in itself for 'corrupt human nature. There will always, therefore, be a desire to mingle its simple, spiritual truth, with something more agreeable to passion and imagination. In its genuine state, Christianity affords nothing to the unconverted heart, in the way either of promise or support; but mixed up with even a slight portion of error, it becomes acceptable both to the proud mind, and the vain fancy. The invisible and mysterious are rendered by its aid more ornamental to the system of human philosophy; and the romance of passion, deepened by the application of its modified spirituality, becomes more interesting and attractive.

Hence there was every reason to expect that, in its progress through the world, Christianity would be subjected to changes and additions injurious to its primitive character. For those who had the wisdom to abide fast by the faith, as it was once delivered to the saints, the truth remained an unpolluted fountain of life and grace; but for the rest, the system which had been given to illuminate the world, was deprived, through the wilfulness of men's perverse understandings, of its noblest properties. It was represented under new forms; and joined with new rites. Every idle thought which struck, for the time, the imagination of any distinguished or influential man, was supposed to have sufficient life, or substance in it, to admit of its being developed, and then taking its permanent place among the maxims or dogmas of the church.

The mode in which many of the fathers expressed themselves, promoted the increase of this great source of error. Their most doubtful phraseology has been often explained, as not meaning that which it is represented as signifying by those who have an interest in so applying it. But who can fail to see the tendency of St. Jerome's reasoning, when he says, "Let those who are ignorant, be instructed, by the testimonies of Scripture, with what veneration they ought to regard holy things, and serve in the ministry of Christ's altar; and that they should not view the holy cups, and veils, and other things pertaining to the service of the Lord's passion, as without holiness, or as mere inanimate and senseless objects, but as things which, from their connexion with the body and blood of the Lord, ought to be venerated with the same homage as his body and blood"?* It is true, that the latter sentence speaks strongly against the notion that the bread and wine were worshipped in Jerome's time from a belief in the real presence: but it is equally evident that, if any species of homage, expressed by the rhetorical term *majestas*, was to be rendered to the mere vessels of the altar, little was wanting to prepare the minds of the people, or the clergy, for offering divine worship to the sacramental elements.

But it still needed some fundamental, or some ruling, idea, to render the Eucharistic service that which it was

"* Discant qui ignorans, eruditi testimoniis scripturarum, qua debeant veneratione sancta suscipere, et altaris Christi ministerio deservire, sacrosque calices, et sancta velamina, et cætera quæ at cultum pertinent dominicæ passionis, non quasi inanima et sensu carentis sanctimoniam non habere, sed ex consortio corporis et sanguinis Domini, eadem qua corpus ejus et sanguis majestate veneranda."—Hieron. Ep. ad Theophil.

destined to become. This was furnished by the change of the sacramental mystery into a sacrificial rite. The process by which this was accomplished, was slow and secret. But before the end of the sixth century, the idea of a sacrifice was intimately connected with the celebration of the communion. Gregory the Great is generally represented as mainly contributing to this important modification of the primitive doctrine of the Eucharist. But, extended and powerful as was the influence of that pontiff, it could never have effected a change of this nature, had not the church, in general, been prepared to adopt it. That which he chiefly did, was to express in fervent language the thoughts which had long been present to his mind ; the impressions which were common to himself, with other men of similar religious attainments and dispositions. According to him, the priest, in administering the Eucharist, presented an offering which was sufficiently precious in the sight of Heaven to bring choruses of angels to share in the solemn delight of the service ; and the efficacy of which was so great, that it availed to unite in loving harmony, things high and low ; the earthly and heavenly ; the visible and invisible. These, and all the other wonderful effects attributed to the divine mystery, Gregory plainly ascribes to its being a representation of the sufferings of the Redeemer. "Christ," he says, "is again immolated in this mystery of the sacred oblation."*

The influence of the Eucharist thus viewed, was now described as extending over a much wider sphere, and to more minute objects of human distress, than in former

* *Dial. lib. iv., c. 58.* "Quæ illam nobis mortem per mysterium reparat, pro absolutione nostra passionem unigeniti semper imitatur Christus iterum in hoc mysterio sacræ oblationis immolatur."

times. Gregory himself relates, that by virtue of the sacrifice on the altar, captives were restored to their supplicating friends, and shipwrecked sailors delivered from the perils of the deep.* But a much more important use was made of the power which the clergy hence enjoyed. The belief in purgatory had grown up into a doctrine of the church. An idea existed, as early as the times of Origen, that a purifying fire would cleanse the souls of the just at the last day from any remaining impurity. St. Augustine quotes the following passage from Malachi : "Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap : and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver : and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver."† "From these words," he says, "it seems evident, that in the final judgment, there will be a certain kind of purgatorial punishment."‡ He forms the same conclusion from the passage in Isaiah, in which it is said : "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."§ "The church of God," he says, "will be purged by the last judgment, as the floor of the garner by the fan, those being purified by the fire who need such purifying."||

* Dial. lib. iv. c. 57.

† Malachi iii. 1—3.

‡ "Ex his quæ dicta sunt, videtur evidenter apparere in illo iudicio quasdam quorundam purgatorias pœnas futuras."—De Civitate Dei, lib. xx. c. 25.

§ Isaiah iv. 4.

|| "Sed qualis tunc erit, velut area per ventilationem, ita per iudicium purgata novissimum; eis quoque igne mundatis, quibus talis mundatio necessaria est."—De Civitate Dei, lib. xx. c. 25.

And, "After the judgment, when those have been purified by the fire, who are worthy of that purification, no sin whatever shall be found in any of the saints."*

Here we see the fundamental idea of the doctrine of purgatory. Under Gregory the Great, the notion of purifying fires was extended to the state of souls during the period intervening between their departure from this world, and the day of judgment. Gregory himself says, that the faithful ought to believe in the existence of a purgatorial fire, prepared for the cleansing of lighter sins ; and he adds, "If offences, indeed, be not unpardonable after death, great is the help which the sacred oblation of the saving sacrifice may afford to souls, even after their departure hence."†

From this point, the growth of ambition in the clergy, and of superstition among the people, and in the church generally, became more and more palpable. But it was connected with the most sacred mysteries and doctrines of religion, and hence the period now to be contemplated will present little more than a scene of error and confusion.

To the evils with which controversy, superstition, and political revolutions, threatened the church at the dawn of the eighth century, may be added those which sprung from the state of the clergy themselves. We have seen with what a spirit of pride and rancour the bishops of the principal dioceses often persecuted, or assailed, each other. Their ambitious pretensions to power were openly displayed. They claimed the homage of their fellow-labourers, of the church, and the world. Nothing could be more absolutely unlike its pattern, its rule, or

* "Cum fuerint etiam igne mundati, qui ejusmodi mundatione sunt digni."—*De Civitate Dei*, lib. xx. c. 26.

† *Dial.* iv. 40, 55.

type, than the prelates of the eighth century to those of the apostolic age. Unhappily, the corruptions which were daily increasing in the church, favoured the usurpations of the most unworthy of its ministers. The ignorance of the people prevented them from inquiring into the truth of the statements, to which the bishops boldly referred their claims. Princes and statesmen who, under other circumstances, would have jealously resisted the growth of such a power, were now either unable to oppose it, or were induced, from a false notion of expediency, to let it advance unnoticed, or unchecked.

But while the characteristic vice of the ruling clergy was ambition or avarice, the ministers of the church, in general, were becoming less and less devoted to the proper duty of their calling. It appears, from the efforts made, from time to time, to establish a better system of discipline, that they were ready to engage in employments and pursuits the most unfitted to their spiritual character. Thus they appeared in the field of battle, and took part in the bloody conflict. They were seen foremost in the chase; and the pleasures of the tavern; the cares of the trader; and the excitement of the gaming-table, occupied, in many instances, more of their thoughts than the service of the altar, or the controversies of the schools. This licentious character of the clergy may, in some degree, be accounted for by the ill-regulated condition of the several dioceses. The bishops, instead of being contented to rule over a single city, and its immediate neighbourhood, as in the earlier times, now presided over extensive provinces; and measured their dignity, and imaginary usefulness, by the number of souls of which they were the nominal, and only the nominal, pastors. But the immediate consequence of this exten-

sion of the episcopal domain, was the escape of many of the clergy from the salutary control and superintendence which, in a better state of things, might have kept them to the performance of their duty. By an ancient law of the church, every clergyman was ordained to minister in a particular locality. As long as this rule was followed, some barrier existed to the increase of vice and error. But reasons presented themselves, at different times, for breaking through the rigid observance of the law. It was obvious that in the case of missionaries a dispensation must be granted; and many of the clergy, so ordained, instead of devoting themselves to the conversion of the heathen only, took advantage of the clerical character to accomplish their vicious designs in the world. Another custom, the growth of courts and camps, contributed greatly to the increase of the abuses referred to. Princes desired to have private chaplains. Their example was followed by the nobility; and even knights began to have priests of their own. Supported as these clergymen were, by the liberality of their patrons, and having no proper pastoral charge, they soon became independent of the bishops, and disregardful of all the ordinary rules of their order. A vast number of unsettled and unemployed ministers were thus hanging about the church; their manners and opinions equally prejudicial to the credit of religion, and their bold assumption of independence destructive of the respect due to ancient discipline.

These causes were sufficient of themselves to produce many of the darkest features of the next three centuries. They opened the way to abuses yet unknown; and the grand interests of religion were threatened with an almost universal subjection to the worst passions, or

weaknesses of mankind. As long as the teaching of Scripture continued to be the fundamental rule of Christian doctrine and morality, there was a health and vigour in the sentiments of believers, which preserved them from any great violation of spiritual consistency. But no sooner were the traditions of the church made to supply the place of the divine word, than doubt overspread the whole circuit of religious opinion. The standard was altered; the law of faith and righteousness was written in another language than that of the Spirit: the human commentary assumed a higher authority than that given to the text; and men, excited and bewildered, felt it a happiness to escape, by any contrivance, from the stormy chaos into which controversy had converted vast provinces of Christendom. Thus a preparation was made for the establishment of that new species of Catholicism which, for many ages to come, was to constitute the form of the visible church.

CHAPTER XXI.

GREEK EMPERORS—JUSTINIAN II.—LEO THE ISAURIAN—CON-
TROVERSY RESPECTING IMAGES—GREGORY AND SERENUS—
THE ICONOCLASTS—TUMULTS AND PERSECUTIONS.

No class of princes have ever taken a more conspicuous part in the affairs of religion, than the Greek emperors, from the time of Constantine. In some cases their interference was highly beneficial to the support of pure doctrine, and the wholesome discipline of the church. But in others, their authority was so introduced to determine controversies, that the principles of religious liberty were wholly subverted; while, in not a few instances, it was employed in the support of flagrant errors and abuses. The earliest of the Greek emperors in the eighth century, reflected the vices and miseries of their age. Justinian the Second was a wretched tyrant, whose crimes were only equalled by the gloomy turbulence of his reign. The first part of his career having been spent in odious licentiousness, he was hurled from the imperial throne by Leontius, a brave officer, and long the victim of his tyranny. Saved from instant death, through the mercy of the conqueror, he was sent, with mutilated features, into the wilds of Tartary. There, in the midst of solitudes as savage as his own thoughts of revenge, he cherished the hope of still recovering his crown. After three years of exile, and the endurance of numerous hardships and perils, he boldly returned, attended by a body of Bulgarian cavalry, to the gates of Constantinople. The fickle

people now beheld in him only a brave prince, whose misdeeds had been more than atoned for by his sufferings. Both the reigning emperor, and Leontius, whom he had supplanted, were loaden with chains, dragged into the presence of Justinian, and then cast helpless on the steps of his throne. Setting his feet on their necks, he listened with fierce delight to the shouts of the people; who, making religion, as usual, an instrument of their impious folly, applied to the tyrant the most striking passages of the prophetic psalms. But among the destined victims of his vengeance, was Callinicus, the venerable patriarch of Constantinople. Sentenced by Justinian to lose his eyes, he was, immediately after the execution of the sentence, sent into exile, and his place supplied by Cyrus, a monk, who had pretended to foretel the return of Justinian. As if to throw discredit on the appearance of imperial zeal in the affairs of the church, the tyrant sent messengers to pope John VII., desiring him to assemble a council at Rome, which might affirm or reject the canons of the council in Trullo. Alarmed at the violence of Justinian, and forgetting his own dignity, the weak pontiff immediately replied, that he accepted all the decrees of that council. Whether Justinian was really anxious to obtain the good opinion of the Roman church, or was jealous of its pretensions, cannot be determined; but not long after the occurrence above-mentioned, he desired Constantine, John's successor, to visit him at Nicomedia. The interview took place, and Justinian received the sacrament at the pontiff's hands. In return for the papal blessing, the emperor formally renewed the privileges of the church; and the two dignitaries appear to have separated, mutually contented with the discourse which had passed between them.

* Justinian reigned six years after his return from Tarry. At the end of that period, he was assailed by a portion of his own army, and being taken prisoner, was immediately sentenced to lose his head. No one lamented his fall ; and he was succeeded by the Armenian, Bardanes Philippicus, who ardently espoused the cause of the Monothelites. He reigned but a short time, as was the case with his successors, Anastasius and Theodosius : the former of whom abdicated and became a monk, while the latter was compelled to resign his crown to the leader of his armies, Leo the Isaurian.

A. D. 727. It was under this monarch that the controversy was commenced which led to so many disastrous proofs of the violent and superstitious spirit of the age. Few points appear capable of clearer proof, than that images were not admitted into the churches of primitive times. It is reported that Constantia, the wife of Licinius, and sister of Constantine the Great, desired Eusebius to obtain for her some portrait, or image of Jesus Christ. The purport of his answer is said to have been as follows :—" You have requested me to send you an image of Jesus Christ. Tell me, I pray you, what it is which you speak of as an image of Christ ? Is it that true and immutable image, which naturally carries the proper marks of its character engraved upon it ? Or is it that which He assumed, on our account, when He was clad in the figure and form of a servant ? I cannot suppose that it is the figure of a God which you demand ; for you have learnt from Jesus Christ himself, ' that no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him.'* Assuredly then the image which

* Matt. xi. 27.

you desire is that of the form of a servant, and of the flesh which he assumed for us. But we have also learnt that it was mingled with the glory of divinity, and that the mortality was swallowed up of life. Who then could represent the resplendent and dazzling rays of such a glory with colours and shades, things dead and inanimate? Even his disciples could not sustain the brightness of his countenance, when he was transfigured on the mountain, but fell to the earth confessing their inability to support the vision. But if the fleshly form, changed by the indwelling Deity, had even then so much power and virtue, what must it not now have, freed as it is from mortality; washed and purified from corruption; the form of a servant changed into the glory of God; death vanquished, the throne of the Father ascended, and the choirs of heaven exclaiming, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in?'" It is obviously implied in this answer to Constantia's request, that Eusebius regarded the fabricating of any image of the Saviour as injurious to the greatness of his glory; or as inconsistent with the sublimity of the idea which ought to be formed of his perfections.

In the canons of a council supposed to have been held at Eliberis, or Elvira, in Spain, in the early part of the fourth century, it is expressly stated, "We would not have pictures placed in churches, lest the object of our worship and adoration, should be painted upon the walls." Many attempts have been made to explain away the simple meaning of this prohibition. Maimbourg pretends, that nothing more was intended than a caution to Christians not to adorn their churches with pictures, or images, which, representing sacred objects, might be ex-

posed in times of persecution, to the insults and desecration of the heathen.

But Augustine, and other fathers, spoke as strongly against images as the council of Eliberis. "When they are fixed," says the former, "in those places where they may attract the attention of worshippers, though destitute of life and sense, yet, by their very likeness to that which lives, will they affect weak minds." And : "That representation of members leads, and as it were, constrains the mind which animates a body, to imagine that body, which is in form similar to its own, endued with similar perceptions." And further : "Idols have more influence to bow down an unhappy soul, because they have mouths, eyes, ears, and feet, than to correct it, because they neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor walk."* And still more strongly : "No man prays or worships thus, looking on an image, without being impressed with the notion that he shall be heard by it, and with the hope that it will aid the fulfilment of his desires."†

But striking and distinct as these testimonies against the use of images in churches seem, there can be little doubt that they were introduced into many places of worship, both in the East and West. We have proofs of the strong and opposite feelings prevailing on the subject in the time of Gregory the Great. On the one hand, an account is given of a monk, who requested the pontiff to send him images of Christ, and the saints. Gregory attended to the wishes of the recluse, and sent him images of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and St. Peter, and St. Paul. The gift, however, was accompanied with a letter, in which it was strongly urged, that the utmost caution should be

* Ep. xlix. De Civitate Dei, lib. iv. c. 31.

† In Psalm cxlii.

used against confounding the representation with the reality, the use of images being to call to mind those whom it is our duty to love, whether they be objects of natural or religious affection.

On the other hand, a case occurred in which the zeal of a bishop was directed in the most conspicuous manner against the growing feeling of veneration for images. The prelate referred to was Serenus, bishop of Marseilles. He had found that the people of his diocese were falling into the grossest excesses in respect to these new objects of religious regard. Anxious to check the evil, but wanting in patience, or ability, to accomplish his object by persuasion and argument, he had taken the violent method of pulling down the images from the churches, and dashing them to pieces, with every mark of ignominy and contempt. Gregory heard of the occurrence, and lamented the intemperate zeal of Serenus. The letter which he addressed to him on the subject will serve to illustrate the temper of the pontiff, and the sentiments which were beginning to be generally entertained respecting the worship of images.

“We praise you,” he says, “for hindering the people from worshipping images, but we rebuke you for breaking them. Tell me, my brother, where is the bishop that ever before proceeded in this manner? If nothing else had hindered you from doing it, ought not the very singularity of the thing to have prevented your taking such a course? Should you not have shrunk from the charge of assuming to yourself the credit of being the only wise and prudent person? There is a vast difference between worshipping an image, and learning whom we ought to worship, by the historical representation of a picture; for that which the Scriptures teach those who can read,

the picture teaches those who have eyes to look upon it. The unlearned see therein what they ought to follow : the picture is a book to them who know not a letter, and hence it is very useful for the instruction of the barbarous people among whom you live, and regard for whom ought to prevent you from giving them any offence by an indiscreet zeal. You must not destroy that which is placed in churches, not to be worshipped, but to give instruction to the ignorant. Ancient custom permitted the pictures of sacred histories to be set up in churches ; and your zeal, if it had been attended with discretion, would never have induced you to tear them, nor occasion a scandal, which has driven away a part of the people from your communion. You ought, therefore, to recal them, and still may make it known, that images are not to be worshipped ; that you would not have broken them had you not found the multitude adoring them ; and that you are now willing to allow them a place in the churches, provided they be used for instruction only. Do not forbid images ; but prevent their being worshipped in any way whatever ; awakening your people to repentance, and the adoration of the Holy Trinity, by contemplating the pictures which represent histories of sacred things.”*

Serenus, it appears, was unconvinced by the arguments of Gregory, and continued perseveringly to destroy the images and pictures which were still to be found in the churches of his diocese. The enthusiasm of the people in behalf of these objects of devotion, only tended to increase the conviction of their bishop, that it was his duty to pursue the course which he had begun. There was evidently a far deeper feeling in the minds of the people

* Lib. ix. Ep. 9.

in favour of images, than could have been inspired by the mere understanding of their worth as means of instruction. Had they been considered only in the latter character, Serenus might soon have silenced the reproaches levelled against him, by supplying his flock with some less suspicious elements of knowledge. But the power of association had awakened other feelings than those which we entertain for a useful book, or a significant representation. The image which had life in its form and feature to the eye, had, as Augustine reasons, life to the mind and heart. Affections were thus inspired which, mingling with a sense of religious reverence, wanted but little cultivation to bring forth all the fruits of idolatrous adoration. The very circumstance, that the people were sunk in ignorance, employed as an argument in favour of images might have been more properly used to show the vast danger of their introduction. In times of great intellectual advancement, it might be difficult to find any class of persons disposed to regard an image of wood or stone with reverence; but when imagination is the ruling principle of the mind; when it is unchecked by habits of reasoning and inquiry, the almost certain consequence of the employment of symbolic figures, or corporeal representations of spiritual natures, is to render the actual truth more incomprehensible; and the visible object more venerable to the fancy. The common facts of ecclesiastical history afford ample proofs of the truth of this remark. Images, at a comparatively very early period, ceased to be looked upon in the character of books for the ignorant, as they are described by Gregory the Great. They were recognised as objects of worship; and the only distinction drawn between them and those of a divine nature, was one which it required the subtlety of theolo-

gians to invent, and weightier arguments than any of them could bring to justify.

But important as was the subject, no attempt had been made by the church to determine authoritatively the kind of homage to be rendered to images, or according to what rule they were to obtain their shrines in the house of God. It was reserved for Leo the Isaurian to bring the question to an issue. He had heard with grief and indignation, the reproaches which both Jews and Mahometans heaped upon Christians as worshippers of idols. Images had been used in the Eastern churches from an early period. Their introduction, and the ardour with which they were revered by the people, have been ascribed to the common imaginative character of the Greeks; to their passion for whatever belonged to artistic genius; and their natural proneness to embody their intellectual conceptions in visible forms.

Such was the growth of these dispositions among the Eastern Christians, that before the end of the sixth century, the custom of bending the knee, or of falling down before images, was generally observed. The Jews contemplated such practices with unfeigned and unconcealed disgust. They accused those who followed them of violating the law of God; and their reasoning was founded on a direct appeal to the records of Scripture. Leontius, bishop of Neapolis, in the island of Cyprus, undertook to answer the accusations thus heaped upon the church. He pretended that the prohibition against images in the Mosaic law did not refer absolutely to their use in religious services, but to the idolatrous veneration sometimes rendered them. He illustrates the feeling entertained for such things among Christians, by refer-

ence to the manner in which affectionate children will embrace any object which may remind them of an absent father. As they would kiss, and weep over, the cloak or the chair, which belonged to him, so do believers in the fulness of their love, honour whatever pertains to Christ. Thus they venerate the sign of his passion in churches, in houses, in rooms, in market-places, and even on vestments, that they may have it continually before their eyes, and never forget their God, as the Jews forgot Him. To this, Leontius added accounts of miracles which had been wrought through the influence of particular images, still remarking, in the way of caution, that these images were not gods, but representations of Christ and his saints, set up in their honour, and as ornaments of the churches.

It mattered little, however, in times like these, whether the arguments employed in such a controversy were weak or powerful. The passion for images had been too long indulged, to be subdued either by the ridicule of disbelievers, or by the reasonings of the spiritual-minded. It was not in churches only, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, or of the saints, were to be found. They decorated the walls of both private and public buildings; were engraven on cups and goblets; entered into the ornaments of embroidered vests; and gave fresh sanctity to the splendid emblazonry of the church-books and records. Images, it is said, were to the Greek churches, what the relics of saints were to the Latin. Curious tales and traditions were not wanting to strengthen the general feeling in their behalf. Some were spoken of as not made by hands; others as furnished by Christ himself. The portrait which he was said to have sent to Abgarus, prince of Edessa, still enjoyed the reve-

rential admiration of the faithful; and, still more, the likeness of himself, which he impressed on the napkin which he received from the pious Veronica, as he passed her door, covered with bloody sweat, on the way to Calvary.

But gênerál as was the belief in the sanctity of images, there were some keen observers both among the clergy and laity, who saw how this sentiment must tend to the injury of pure religion, and to the debasement of those classes of society which the gospel only in its purity could raise and enlighten. In these views they were further strengthened by the study of Scripture. The divine word spoke plainly and fully against image-worship; and all that had ever been said on the subject by the acutest reasoners of the age, vanished into nothing before the simple truth of the law and the gospel.

When Leo the Isaurian ascended the imperial throne, the evil had risen almost to its height. He took a profound interest in the affairs of the church; and the bold spirit of the barbarian conqueror exhibited itself in the measures which he adopted to enlarge its bounds. The Jews and heretics who came within his power, were compelled by acts of violence to embrace the gospel, and conform to the laws of the church. Resistance was attended with so much suffering that few had the courage to withstand the proceedings of the emperor. The success which he thus enjoyed in the compulsory conversion of the known enemies of the church, appears to have encouraged him in adopting a similar course in correcting the abuses which he discovered in the church itself. But with all his energy, with his earnestness and right intentions, the errors into which the persecuting character of his disposition led him, more than counterbalanced any

benefits to be looked for from the tenor of his proceedings. He regarded himself as possessing unlimited power over the church, and as combining the priestly with the royal character. His natural good sense enabled him to discern the difficulties which must attend an attempt to suppress usages which had taken a deep hold of popular feelings and prejudices.

The aid of the clergy generally could in no wise be looked for. Germanus, the patriarch of Constantinople, had reached the ninetieth year of his age, and was a devoted champion of image-worship. It was in vain to reason against the sentiments which he had adopted, and which were now interwoven with all his notions of religion. The emperor is said to have held a long discourse with him on the subject, and the substance of this conversation is supposed to be contained in three letters, which Germanus wrote in defence of his opinions. His arguments are founded on the subtle distinctions, which were every day becoming more familiar to the ears of the clergy. "When we adore," he said, "the image of Christ, we adore neither the wood nor the colours with which it is covered, but the invisible God, who is in the bosom of his Father, and whom we worship in spirit, and in truth. The Christian faith, the worship and adoration which it inculcates, relate to God alone. We adore nothing that is created; nor render to our fellow-servants the worship which is due to God alone. In allowing images, we have not the remotest thought of diminishing the perfection of divine worship, for we make no attempt to represent the invisible Divinity, which the angels themselves cannot comprehend. But the Son of God having become man that he might accomplish our salvation, we make an image of his humanity to strengthen our faith; to show

that he did not take our nature upon him by a mere metaphor, but truly and substantially ; and thereby to recal to our minds the doctrine of his incarnation. So in the same manner, we make an image of his holy mother, who being a woman, and of the same nature with ourselves, conceived and bore the Almighty God. We admire also, and revere as blessed, the apostles, the martyrs, the prophets, and all the other saints who have been servants of God ; who have been distinguished by their good works, by the testimony which they have rendered to the truth, and by their patience in suffering. We introduce images of these holy men, to remind us of their courage, and their virtues. But we do not render them the homage which God alone can claim. All that we do is to cherish affection for them, and to fortify our faith by the visible representation of things deserving of remembrance."

A Phrygian bishop, named Constantine, appears to have been one of the first among the clergy to deplore the increasing passion for images. By those who looked upon their introduction as essential to the edification of the people, this prelate was regarded as the author of a grievous scandal ; and Germanus, in writing to him, spoke of his conduct as that of a man, who might be charged with the ruin of souls. "Scandalize no longer," he says, "the innocent people. Remember the terrible judgments of God against those who occasion the fall of believers ; and know that, till you have delivered the letter with which I have charged you, to your metropolitan, I forbid you, in the name of the Holy Trinity, from performing any episcopal function ; for I prefer using rigour, to appearing guilty in the sight of God."

To another bishop he wrote, "You dwelt with us for a

considerable time ; we conversed together, and you proposed questions on points of Scripture, but advanced nothing against the images of the saints, of Jesus Christ, and his holy mother. But I hear now that, as by a common resolution, you have ordered all images to be removed from your churches. Remember, that we ought to avoid all novelties, and especially when they are likely to prove offensive to the faithful, and are opposed to the long-established practice of the church. The images of the saints serve but to excite the love of virtue, in the same manner as the discourse of an eloquent teacher. For painting is an abridged history, and all refers to the glory of our heavenly Father. Many councils have been held. Would they have been silent on the subject of images had they regarded them as leading to idolatry ?”

Another passage in this letter shows the progress made in the ceremonies connected with the homage rendered to images. “ You ought not,” says Germanus, “ to be offended because lights and perfumes are placed before them. These are symbols of the virtues of the saints, and signify the spiritual light, and the gifts of the Spirit, for which they were distinguished.”

Doubtful of his own power to defend the cause of images against the determination of the emperor, the aged patriarch wrote to Gregory II. requiring both his counsel and his aid. The pontiff answered his appeal by expressing himself as profoundly thankful that the practice of the church was so nobly supported by the zeal of its minister. “ There is no idolatry,” he said, “ in the respect paid to images. All that concerned the incarnation of the Son of God took place really and visibly. He was born, performed miracles, suffered, and rose again from the dead. Would to God, that the heavens, the earth, the

sea, and whatever they contain, could recount these marvels, whether by discourse, by writing, or by painting !”

Gregory also wrote to the emperor himself. “Having received,” he said, “epistles from him, at the beginning of his reign, which exhibited great soundness of opinion, he was astonished to find him now destroying images, and treating those who honoured them as idolaters. Images,” he adds, “are very useful to excite the affections of believers.” No image, he allows, could be made of the Deity ; and the reverence with which such objects are regarded ought not to be confounded with the worship due to God. But he observes, that in respect to the image of Christ, the faithful were accustomed to say before it, “Lord Jesus, save us.” And that before the image of the Virgin Mary, they uttered these words: “Holy mother of God, intercede for us with thy Son, that he may save our souls.”

Supposing this letter to be genuine, we have here very clear indications of the connexion of image-worship with abuses of doctrine, the most injurious to the pure faith of the Gospel. We learn also from the same source, that the Roman pontiffs were now beginning to be suspected of that opposition to the temporal power, which subsequently led to so many deplorable conflicts. Leo having heard that Gregory was exciting several provinces of the empire to resist his mandates, the latter answered, that he was so far from raising tumults against him, that he had written to all the princes of the West in his behalf ; that they had expressed their desire to preserve peace with him ; but that having heard of his becoming a destroyer of images, and especially of his having broken one of Christ, they had ceased to respect him, and had cast down his statues. With regard to the threats which Leo had uttered against him, Gregory says,

“ You ought to be aware that the bishops of Rome have ever been anxious to maintain peace between the East and the West. This was the case with our predecessors ; and we follow their example. If you continue to insult and threaten us, we will not contend against you, but will withdraw into Campania.” He adds, that if troops were sent, as the emperor had threatened, to break down the image of St. Peter at Rome, the blood which would be shed would fall upon the head of the sacrilegious persecutor.

Little affected by Gregory’s remonstrances, Leo haughtily replied, that he was both emperor and priest ; and the answer which this again produced, on the side of the pontiff, was treated, like his former address, with proud contempt. Some provinces of Greece now rose in open rebellion against him. His skill as a warrior enabled him speedily to put down the insurrection, and the success which attended his arms, encouraged him to pursue still more resolutely his plans of religious reform. Finding the impossibility of overcoming the resistance of Germanus, by his own private arguments or persuasions, he determined to summon a council. The assembly met in the month of January, 730. Both the worship of images and the invocation of saints were forbidden by the decrees of the synod. Relics were treated with as little regard ; and when Germanus firmly refused to sign the decrees, Leo, by an act of authority corresponding to the ideas which he had formed of his ecclesiastical supremacy, deposed the aged patriarch, and even drove him forcibly from his residence. The patience and meekness with which Germanus bore this unworthy treatment, proved how many Christian virtues might consist with the most serious errors on questions like those now disputed. He retired to a house belonging to his paternal estate, and

converting it into a monastery, passed his few remaining years in constant prayer and meditation. Anastasius, who succeeded him, is described as a man of wholly different character ; as a worldly and time-serving courtier. Wholly indebted to the emperor for his elevation, he readily acceded to his wishes, and neglected no means of effecting the object which he had in view.

Leo was now resolved to pursue the course which his extravagant notions of the imperial prerogative naturally pointed out. His edict for the removal of images had been generally disregarded. He determined to wait no longer the change in the feelings of the people, which he had hoped to produce by argument. The first proof which he gave of this resolve was sufficient to excite the populace to madness. In the vestibule of the palace at Constantinople, was an image of Christ upon the cross, venerable above all things in the eyes of the multitude. It was the common belief that it had existed from the time of Constantine the Great, and that it was the consecrated memorial of the vision which had led to his conversion. When the officer whom Leo had charged with the perilous duty of destroying this image commenced his work, a crowd of women surrounding the sacred memorial, besought him, with clamours and tears, to withhold his sacrilegious hands. They implored in vain. He mounted a ladder, and raising his axe, struck the image three blows in the face. The mingled wrath and grief of the spectators now knew no bounds. They broke loose in a torrent of execrations : and the foremost of the crowd seizing the ladder, hurled the unhappy officer to the ground. As he lay groaning on the earth, the infuriated women rushed upon him, and sought still further to satiate their rage by tearing their victim almost limb from limb.

But Leo was not to be turned from his purpose. Other officers were sent to execute his design ; and the image being torn from the wall, was burnt to ashes. The crowd, in the mean time, had hastened to the patriarchal palace. Their wrath against Anastasius was vented in threats, which made him tremble for his safety. An application to the emperor brought a troop of soldiers to his gate. The most conspicuous of the women were seized, and put to death. Many other persons, supposed to be implicated in their crime, suffered the same punishment ; and if persecution, or violence could have accomplished the object, Leo would soon have seen image-worship abolished in his dominions.

It is worthy of mention, that hostile as this emperor was to images of every kind, properly so called, he did not deny the lawfulness, or even usefulness of symbolic signs. Hence, no sooner was the ancient representation of the crucified Saviour removed from the palace wall, than he placed there a simple cross, a more fitting memorial, it was intimated in the superscription, of our Lord's passion, than a senseless, lifeless form of painted stuff.

But it was not thus that the people could be satisfied. There were associations connected with the image which had been removed, too long and dearly cherished to be transferred to any other. A curious story is told, illustrative of the peculiar feelings with which this object of veneration was regarded. One of the chief merchants of Constantinople had been reduced, by shipwrecks, to a state of great necessity. He sought, in vain, the assistance of friends and acquaintances. None would trust a man with money whose circumstances were known to be so embarrassed. At length, but almost despairing of success, he went to a rich Jew, and besought the loan of such

a sum as might enable him to fit out some ships, and recommence his business. The Jew looked at him with surprise, and immediately demanded what security he could give. Find me, he added, some good bondsman, and you shall have as much money as you wish. The merchant knew how useless it would be to apply again to his friends. No one would be bound for him, or become connected in any way with his affairs. He acquainted the Jew with his circumstances, but taking him by the hand, begged him to accompany him to a certain spot, where he thought the required security might still be obtained. The Jew followed him as he desired. They arrived at the palace ; but instead of entering its gates, or seeking the chamber of some wealthy courtier, the merchant led his companion before the image of Christ, and pointing to the figure, pronounced in a tone which betokened the profoundest faith and confidence, "There is my bondsman : Be assured that your money will be safe."

The Jew, it is said, was so moved by the fervent expression of the merchant, that he consented to accept his mysterious security. A large sum of gold was placed in his hands. He recommenced his business. But his hopes were put to a severe trial. Two of his ships were wrecked, and ruin appeared again to threaten him. At length the prospect became fairer. His remaining vessels made prosperous voyages. First one, and then another event happened, to increase the value of his cargoes ; and, in a short time, he again saw himself surrounded by wealth and friends. Never forgetting the Jew, to whose generosity he owed so much, he summoned him to his chamber, and there showing him the riches which he had accumulated, discharged the bond, to which he had, as it were, set the name of Christ. The Jew, it is said,

was strangely affected by the wonderful circumstances to which he had thus been made a party. He did not resist the impression left upon his mind ; and confessing himself and his family converts to the gospel, he was soon after baptized, and became, in the end, a faithful minister of the truth."*

While incidents like this were popularly related, as connected with the history of images, the power of the state could avail little to correct the superstitious feelings with which they were regarded. Leo, though he succeeded in removing, by violence, the more obnoxious of the images which adorned the churches, and other public places, found it impossible to prevent the people from cherishing these objects of reverence in their houses, or in the more remote provinces. At his death, therefore, but little had, in reality, been done to correct the abuses which he, and many enlightened men with him, so greatly deplored.

Leo's son and successor, Constantinus Copro-
 A. D. nymus, was no less inimical to the worship of
 754. images than his father. During a part of his reign, he was exposed to the dangerous machinations of political rivals ; but no sooner did he find himself firmly seated on his throne, than he commenced measures for carrying on the design undertaken by his predecessor. His first proceedings were interrupted by a series of calamities, which the people readily attributed to the violence with which the sacred images were sought for, and destroyed. Earthquakes, plague and famine, were the befitting scourges, it was thought, of those who could either perpetrate such crimes, or view them without resistance.

* Auct. Bib. Patr. Par. t. ii. 1648.

Constantine soon discovered that obstacles to the success of his plans increased every day, and that he must now endeavour to correct by the church itself, the corruptions which the church had fostered. With this view, he resolved to summon a general council, and three hundred and thirty-eight bishops readily obeyed his call. It is matter of great doubt whether these prelates were generally in favour of the emperor's designs. There is some difficulty, indeed, in believing that such could be the case. The popular reverence for images was not likely to be supported without the aid of the clergy; and hence there is reason to suspect, that it was the blandishments of imperial favour rather than the stern simplicity of Christian truth, which brought so large a number of bishops to the council at Constantinople. No representative, however, of the more important sees, was present. That of Constantinople was vacant; and Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, were too far removed from the influence of the emperor to submit to his dictation or guidance.

In the preamble to the acts of the council, it is solemnly stated, that Jesus Christ, having delivered us from the sin of idolatry, has taught us to worship God in spirit and in truth: that the devil, not enduring to behold the beauty of the church, when pure and holy, insensibly restored idolatry, under the mask of Christianity; and that therefore, the Saviour, who, at first, sent forth his apostles for the suppression of idolatry, had, in later times, raised up pious emperors to diffuse knowledge among the people, and set at nought the inventions of the adversary. The concluding canon directs, that all images, of whatever kind they were, should be removed from the churches; that no one should venture again to make any such image; that if a clergyman should be found guilty of placing one

either in a church or in a private house, he should be deprived of his rank ; and that if a layman should commit the crime, he should suffer excommunication, together with all the consequences attending a breach of the imperial laws. But, strange to say, while these severe decrees were enacted against images, the council pronounced it consistent with Christian piety to address prayers to the Virgin Mary ; to implore her intercessions, as all-powerful with God ; and to pray to, and honour, the saints with a devotion corresponding to their respective ranks.

When the council had terminated its labours, the emperor nominated the monk Constantine, bishop of Syleum, in Phrygia, to the vacant patriarchate. He found in this ecclesiastic a firm and able supporter of his views, and if the sincerity of the other prelates, whom he had summoned to his aid, could be depended upon, rarely had a theological dispute been determined with greater unanimity or earnestness.

Unhappily, the case was one in which persecution was almost sure to be the consequence of such proceedings. According both to the laws of the empire and the decrees of the church, as now promulgated, the setting up of an image was a crime of the worst character. The offender stood exposed, therefore, to the treatment proper to a malefactor : and no consideration founded on his personal qualities, on questions of piety or conscience, could avail to his defence. Among the greatest sufferers in this persecution were the monks. The venerable Stephen, abbot of the monastery of Saint Auxentius, near Nicomedia, fell a victim to the emperor's rage. If history speak true, nothing could exceed the barbarity with which this pious ascetic was treated. He had committed no

offence, but that of refusing to acknowledge the validity of the decrees passed in the late council. His fate was shared by numerous other monks ; and it appears that their sufferings were generally occasioned by the well-founded suspicions of the emperor, that they were the most determined champions of the popular superstitions. But there was neither wisdom nor justice in his proceedings. The sympathy of the world was naturally excited in favour of men, whose worst offence was a devoted love for the objects of a fervent, though erring piety. Instead, therefore, of suppressing the passion for images by the imprisonment, the public torture, or execution of the monks, he rather stimulated it. These men were prepared for suffering. They had inured themselves to pain by the discipline of their cells ; and when the multitude beheld them quietly bending their necks to the executioner, or stretching themselves on the rack, with as much composure, as other men would lie down on their beds, the feeling arose that any cause, which spirits so fortified approved, must be intimately connected with that of truth and virtue.

The persecution was continued, with more or less violence, till the end of Constantine's reign. His successor, Leo, refrained from any act of open hostility to the monks, and their party. On the ascension of the younger Constantine, the empress Irene, his mother, exercised the chief power in the government. Paul was patriarch of Constantinople at this time. He had succeeded Nicetas, who was elevated to the dignity when the unfortunate Constantine fell a victim to the displeasure of his capricious patron. The piety and moderation of Paul had recommended him to the favour of the most influential men about the court ; but he had acknowledged the acts of

the late synod, and was numbered among the Iconoclasts, or image-breakers. Whether it was that his opinions were really changed, or that his position as patriarch was rendered uneasy by the present temper of the court, it would be difficult to say ; but we find that he insisted upon resigning his dignity ; and alleged, as a reason for his determination, that he had grievously erred in not defending the truth against the violence of the Iconoclasts.

Another act in this melancholy drama of error, fanaticism, and persecution was now to commence. The empress Irene obtained the appointment of Tarasius, her son's secretary, to the patriarchal chair. He was a man of acute mind, and only accepted the dignity, on condition that means should be immediately adopted for the assembling of a general council. Letters were accordingly despatched to the bishops of both the East and West. They contained a declaration of the new patriarch's faith, which was founded, in all its main articles, on the doctrines established by the six general councils. Pope Adrian, in answering his epistle, expressed his grief at the evils which oppressed the Eastern church, and implored him, in the most pathetic language, to restore the worship of images, and all the observances which might render them venerable in the eyes of the world. In conclusion, the pontiff insisted strongly on the rights of his own church ; demanded the restoration of certain portions of the patrimony of St. Peter, which had been unlawfully seized by preceding emperors ; and spoke even still more emphatically against the assumption of the title of "universal bishop," which Tarasius had adopted in imitation of his more ambitious predecessors.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the patriarch, and the

powerful support rendered him by Irene, no council assembled at the period appointed. A large number of bishops arrived at Constantinople, and were ready to unite in the discussion of the question at issue. But they found, on conversing, with each other in private, that there was reason to doubt the issue of any inquiry under the present circumstances of the empire. The patriarch had been raised to the dignity without regard to the laws of the church. Though a man of skill and probity, he had no great virtues to recommend him to such a station. He was not even a clergyman, when nominated to the high office of patriarch ; and never had the power of the state been exercised in a more arbitrary manner than in his elevation. The bishops themselves were divided into two parties, each obstinately determined to uphold its views for or against, the worship of images. That such would be the case it required little judgment to foretell. Some of them had been promoted by Leo the Isaurian ; and their faithful attachment to the memory of their patron, rendered them formidable opponents to the present imperial party. The monks, on the other hand, and those of the bishops who had long cherished in secret their veneration for images, were now more anxious than ever to use their newly-acquired liberty. Dreading the persevering fury of the late emperor, they had preserved their lives and their dignities by a timely suppression of their zeal. In this season of reaction, they eagerly looked forward to triumphs, sufficient to compensate them for their dangers and humiliations. But Irene was too politic to hazard a collision between these parties, in an open assembly. By the exercise, therefore, of force and cunning, she contrived to rid herself of the most dreaded of the disputants ; and, delaying the opening of the council for another year,

prepared her plans with a caution admirably calculated to insure their success.

A. D.
787. The season at length arrived for the assembling of the council. It met in the city of Nicæa, but under very different circumstances and auspices to those which gave such dignity to the first council held in that city, above four hundred years since. The principal business of the synod at its opening session, was that which concerned the bishops who had forsaken the party now dominant in the church, but were at present anxious to be reconciled to their more consistent brethren. Some high names were found among them; as that of Basil, bishop of Ancyra; of Hypatius, bishop of Nicæa; and those of other prelates distinguished by their rank and abilities. Such was the influence of the court on the minds of these chief pastors of the church, that they humbly expressed their sorrow at having ever treated images with disrespect. Instead of persevering in this grievous error, they proclaimed aloud, that it was now their joy to honour and worship these sacred objects of Christian regard. They entreated the fathers of the council to admit them to a place in their assembly; to free them from the suspicions which they had so unhappily brought upon themselves; and to confide in their future devotion to the sentiments of the church.

It is a curious indication of the spirit of the times, that the ruling members of the synod considered it necessary to deliberate long and anxiously respecting the case of these prelates. The question was seriously agitated, whether the error of which they had been guilty did not reduce them to the same condition as that of the worst class of heretics; whether, that is, they ought not to be treated with as great severity as those who had been

found guilty of denying, or perverting, some fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. It was not till after many arguments had been employed on the side of the penitent bishops, that the milder view was taken of their case, and that they were permitted to consider themselves safe from the threatened sentence of deposition.

The main object for which the assembly had been convened, was steadily pursued through all its sittings. There were, however, some regulations passed which indicate the desire of the council to defend the church against the attacks to which it seemed the more exposed, the further it declined from the primitive simplicity. Thus it was ordered, that a strict examination should be instituted into the acquirements of newly-elected bishops; who were to be rejected, unless they were well acquainted with the Psalter, the Gospels, the Epistles of St. Paul, and the Canons of the Church; and were in other respects qualified to instruct the people, and perform efficiently the several duties of their office.

By another canon, the election of bishops and priests by princes, was declared void, and the election of bishops was to proceed from bishops.

According to the council of Constantinople, the making, or setting up, of images was forbidden, we have seen, on pain of the severest punishments; but in the present assembly it was decided that, "the holy and venerable images, not only of the cross, but those which are made in colours, upon cloth, and others of a different kind, might be exposed to sight; set up in churches, engraved on vessels, worked upon the sacerdotal vestments, painted upon walls and tablets, and employed to decorate houses, and even the highways." It was further added, that the images thus exhibited, might be kissed and treated with

other marks of reverence, but not adored with the adoration proper to God alone ; that incense and wax-candles might be burnt before them, as before the cross ; the reverence which was thus paid to the image passing to the object which it represented.

The council having thus finished its work, the bishops, and others, of whom it was constituted, were summoned by the empress Irene to attend her at Constantinople. No time was lost in obeying this command. Another sitting was held in the imperial palace. Irene and her son were present ; and when the decisions of the council had been publicly read, the former demanded of the bishops if these were their unanimous sentiments on the important matters committed to their deliberation. On their answering in the affirmative, both she and the youthful emperor signed the canons ; and the palace resounded with the shouts of the people, taught to suppose that religion had gained a triumph over its worst enemies, by this formal recognition of the sacredness of images.

Thus the Greek and Latin churches, though so ready to oppose each other on almost every other question, were intimately united in their efforts to establish the worship of images. But, powerful as was this combination, and manifesting as it did the general tendency of the age, there were still portions of the church of Christ, in which the progress of error was boldly and perseveringly resisted. The clergy of France retained a large share of independence. We have seen how strenuously Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, opposed Gregory the Great, in his determination on the subject in question. The sentiments entertained by Serenus, were cherished by his successors ; and the fruits of this feeling were remarkably

exhibited about three years after the council of Nicæa had attempted to legitimatize the general introduction and worship of images.

A. D. 790. Charlemagne was now at the height of his prosperity. No monarch had yet appeared whose united ability and successes promised to afford him so extensive an influence over the state of Europe. To the happiness of his subjects, and the advancement of his own renown, this great prince had gathered around him many of the most eminent men of the time. Aided by their counsels, he employed the best means in his power to promote the interests of religion and knowledge. The rapid increase of superstition did not escape his observation; and when he saw how greatly the force of spiritual piety was likely to be injured by the worship of images, he caused a work to be published, expressive of his opposition to this dangerous innovation on the simplicity of the gospel.

Charlemagne himself is the reputed author of the treatise referred to, and which is a formal refutation of the conclusions adopted by the second council of Nicæa. In the introduction to this celebrated work, it is said, that, "the church, redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, her spouse, washed with the saving water of baptism, fed by the precious blood of her Saviour, and anointed with holy oil, is sometimes assailed by heretics and infidels, and sometimes vexed and torn by the quarrels of the schismatical and the proud." And, further: "She is an ark, containing those that are to be saved, as figured by that of Noah; an ark, exposed to the storms and the deluge of this world's tumults, but never to be wrecked; an ark which will never yield to its destructive whirlpools, nor to the hostile powers, of whatever kind

they may be, by which it is surrounded. For it is Christ who contends for her; and, under his guardianship, she will never cease to maintain inviolable the true faith and confession of the adorable Trinity. The church is a holy mother, without spot and corruption; always fruitful, and yet a virgin. The more she is assailed by the contradictions of the world, the more she increases in virtue; the lower she is brought, the higher she raises up herself."

This really noble eulogy on the church is immediately followed by the statement, that Charlemagne, "having taken the reins of his kingdom in his hands, and being in the bosom of the church, thus beloved and venerable, was bound to endeavour her vindication and support; that not only the princes, but the bishops of the East, puffed up with sinful pride, had swerved from the holy doctrine, and the apostolic tradition, blazoning forth impertinent and foolish synods, to make themselves famous with posterity."

Allusion is then made to the council of Constantinople, which is censured as passing an indiscriminate sentence on images of every kind, wrongly confounding them with idols; whereas, while the latter lead to the destruction of souls, the former may be employed simply for ornament, or remembrance. The bishops of this council were so blind, it is said, as to anathematize all those who had images in churches, and to boast that their emperor Constantine had freed them from idols. Another synod, adds the writer, was held about three years before, composed of the successors of the former council, and of those who had assisted at it. But this, though adopting a directly opposite course, was no less faulty than that of an earlier period. The bishops of the Nicene council ordered the adoration of images, which those of the former assembly

would not suffer to be seen. Thus they fell into contrary absurdities ; the one confounding the use and adoration of images ; and the other supposing idols and images to be one and the same thing. "As for us," says the royal author, or the venerable Alcuin in his name, "being content with what we find in the Gospels, and in the writings of the apostles, and being instructed by the works of the fathers, and not wandering from Him who is the way and the truth, we receive the first six councils, and reject all the novelties of the two synods of which we have spoken. And as to the acts of the latter, we thought ourselves bound to write against the errors, which, destitute as they are of common sense and eloquence, they set forth and defend. So that if the writing in which these things are contained, should defile the hands of those who hold it, or the ears of those who read it, the poison, which it seems fitting to instil, may be expelled by our Treatise, supported by the authority of the Scriptures ; and that thus, this weak enemy, who is come from the East, may be subdued in the West by the sentiments of the holy fathers, whose testimonies we have here produced. We have undertaken this work with the consent of the bishops of the kingdom which God has given us ; not, indeed, out of any ambitious design, but animated by an earnest zeal for God's house, and by the love of truth, knowing that it is a holy thing to pursue that which is good, and a great sin to consent to that which is evil."

Sensible as is this preface, and forcible as are many of the arguments brought against the worship of images, there is a seeming contradiction in several parts of the work. Thus, while the danger and sinfulness of image-worship are spoken of in the strongest terms, the greatest

tenderness is exercised in respect to the use of images, as ornaments and memorials ; the writer apparently forgetting sometimes, that the veneration for images, in the latter respect, had been, in reality, the main cause of all those abuses which he was desirous of combating. Then again, while the assumption of certain titles by the Eastern emperors is described as approaching to impiety, the power of the Roman pontiffs, as successors of St. Peter, is distinctly allowed ; and though the present work was written against practices which the pope justified and encouraged, it is confessed, that when any question arose in the church, the appeal ought to be made to Rome ; that no writings were to be consulted, which she did not acknowledge ; that as St. Peter was preferred before all the other apostles, so the church of Rome was above all churches, and this, especially, because she held her primacy from Jesus Christ himself, and not from the constitutions of synods.

Having gone through the ordinary arguments advanced in the controversy respecting images, the writer thus speaks of the anathemas which the council of Nicæa had pronounced against those who refused to worship them. "How contrary," he exclaims, "is our conduct in the West, to that of these Eastern bishops ? We pray and give alms, according to the practice of the church of our fathers ; and they anathematize them. We beg rest for them in the sacrifices of the mass ; and they breathe imprecations against them in the councils. We remember them in our prayers ; and they do not mention them, except with condemnation. We pray that they may rest in Abraham's bosom ; and they wish them to be damned with heretics."

But he acknowledges that both were wrong : the one

party in condemning the use of images for ever ; the latter in desiring to have them adored : the one for throwing them into the fire ; the other for burning incense before them : the former for avoiding the sight of them ; the latter for continually embracing them : the one for anathematizing those who cherish them ; the other for condemning those who refuse to worship them. The writer then declares the solemn judgment of the French church on the whole matter. " We do not consider," he says, " that images ought to be altogether abolished, which is the opinion of one party ; nor do we assert, as is the case with another, that they ought to be adored. Let us render adoration to God alone ; and reverence the saints according to the ancient traditions of the church. We tolerate images in our sacred edifices as ornaments, or, as memorials of things past. Thus, on the one hand, we avoid too great severity, and on the other, servility and flattery. We stand clear of malice on this side, and of foolishness on the other. We are neither too bold, nor too weak ; and hence we endeavour to show to those who run into the opposite extremes, the way which they ought to keep in going to Christ."

A very important principle is involved in the remarks with which Charlemagne closes some statements respecting the character of œcumenical, or universal, assumed by the second council of Nicæa. " If it be so," he says, " that the bishops of two or three provinces meet together, and, according to the authority of tradition, establish some doctrine, or make some rule agreeable to the doctrine and discipline of the ancient church, what they do is catholic, and their council may be called universal ; because, though it be not composed of bishops from all the various regions of the world, what it does is agreeable to the

faith and tradition of the whole church. But, on the contrary, if the members of the synod attempt to establish some novelty, what they do is not catholic. In a word, whatsoever is really ecclesiastical is catholic; and whatsoever is catholic is universal. All that is universal is not new. Hence the synod, which we speak of, being contrary to the sentiments of the universal church, cannot be owned as universal."

This is an instance of a fact very interesting in the history of the church. Amid the tumult of controversy, the still small voice of reason was perpetually making itself heard; and principles were being evolved which, though disregarded at the time, became afterwards mighty supports of the church, and of its most sacred claims.

The controversy respecting images was apparently settled in the East by the decisions of the council. But the emperor Constantine was as little content to acknowledge the acts of his mother in matters of this kind, as he was ready to submit to her dictation in those of his court and government. He had scarcely assumed, therefore, the direction of affairs, when he set aside the acts of the council of Nicæa, and again opened the field of controversy. His successor, Leo the Fifth, re-established the decrees of the council of Constantinople, the mere acknowledgment of which had involved so many bishops and others in the charge of heresy. The question was as far from being settled in the West. Charlemagne's book excited the grave attention of pope Adrian; and the answer which the pontiff returned to this expression of feeling on the part of the Gallican monarch and clergy, shows how anxious he was to suppress the still existing spirit of inquiry, so little in accordance with his own views, or with the supposed interests of his church.

CHAPTER XXII. . *

PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY—MEANS EMPLOYED IN ITS DIFFUSION—INCREASING DIFFICULTIES IN THE PURE TEACHING OF THE GOSPEL—DISTINGUISHED MEN.

IN the midst of the troubles to which the church, in its more conspicuous provinces, stood exposed, the knowledge of Christianity was being rapidly diffused over the different countries of the world. From the account which has been given of the growth of opinions and practices, so abhorrent from the spirit of the gospel, it is easy to understand, that those who now went forth, to plant the cross in distant nations, were not always inspired with the one simple and earnest thought, which animated the primitive missionaries in their sublime undertakings. They carried with them the favourite notions of their respective churches. Their minds had imbibed, with the better principles of Christian charity and truth, the vague notions which threw a shadow over the brightest pages of the gospel. Hence arose the system of adaptation and compromise: the practice, that is, of bringing divine doctrine not merely within the reach of their comprehension, but within that of the tastes and prejudices of the ignorant people to whom the gospel was offered. Little evil could have originated from the anxious efforts of the preacher to make the truth intelligible to simple minds. He might have employed the most homely similes, and

even means from which, in our higher state of cultivation, we should now turn with feelings of doubt and dislike. But it was not to conciliate the understanding, but to please the imagination, and gratify the passions of the converts, that the teachers of religion now laboured. They forgot that it was not by increasing the extent of the visible church, or even by persuading the heathen to adopt the name of Christ, that the great work of regeneration could be accomplished. Their anxiety to obtain the pledge, the profession of allegiance to the church, impelled them forward at too rapid a pace. By the time they had accomplished this part of their work, they were glad to rest; and the remainder of the task was left to be completed, if carried on at all, by the blind instrumentality of ceremonies; by the influence of names, or the force of circumstances.

We here speak of the general character of the measures adopted for the conversion of countries to the gospel. Happily for the salvation of souls, God is perpetually overruling the folly and the weakness of man; and effecting his own gracious purposes in the midst of the least encouraging events. Thus while ecclesiastical ambition, or worldly policy, was perpetually tending to the corruption of Christianity, and while even those who sincerely desired to further its propagation, diminished its power by sacrificing to their fears, or their hopes, divine truth had its real converts: the number of the saved was daily increasing; and the Holy Spirit was diffusing light and grace from one quarter of the earth to the other.

The movement which took place, in the fourth and fifth centuries, among the northern tribes, was one of the providential means employed for the extension of the gospel. Many of the barbarians taking up their abode in

Gaul, were there brought to the knowledge of the truth by such men as Avitus, of Vienne, Cæsarius, of Arles, and other bishops or abbots of like character. The Burgundians appear to have been less happy in their conversion than their kindred tribes. Arianism gave an early taint to their creed ; and the influence which they exercised on their neighbours was long and extensively prejudicial to the truth. The conversion of the Franks ; the firm establishment of the gospel in Ireland and Britain ; the growth of learning in the former island, and the piety and enlightenment which marked the character of its clergy ; all betoken the energy which inspired the agents employed by God at this early period in the diffusion of Christianity.

Germany had been made acquainted with the gospel in remote times. But the rude character of the people, and the unsettled state of their country, prevented it from taking any firm root in their minds. It was not till the latter half of the fifth century, that the Germans were generally led to acknowledge Christianity as a means of peace and salvation. They were indebted for their conversion to Severin, one of the most faithful and devoted of God's servants in that distant age. This remarkable man, who, though a European, had spent the early part of his life in the solitude of an Eastern desert, arrived in Germany, near Passau, on the borders of the Danube, not long after the death of Attila. The country, at that time, exhibited the most deplorable proofs of the ravages of war, famine, and pestilence. Despair had seized upon the hearts of the wretched inhabitants ; and never had mercy better cause for its exercise than that which was afforded it by these perishing people.

Endowed with the most singular power of endurance,

Severin began his labours by attending to the sick and helpless ; by visiting the hordes of slaves and prisoners to whom death would have seemed a blessing ; and by employing as he best could the scanty means which existed for the relief of the whole. Impossible as it had appeared to afford comfort in such a state of things, Severin's wisdom and indefatigable charity, gradually revived a feeling of hope among the people. They attended to his instructions ; learnt to bear, by his example, want and toil with less murmuring ; and, in time, could listen to his words proclaiming the love of God, the duty of repentance, and the glories of another world, with sentiments of admiration and gratitude. The feelings thus inspired were greatly increased by the proofs which Severin gave of his desire to improve the temporal condition of his hearers. He sought out the wealthier inhabitants of the neighbouring districts, and by his earnest entreaties obtained large contributions for the multitudes who were starving around him. His reputation, and consequent influence, so increased with the evidence which he afforded of his piety, that he was enabled to plead effectually for the poor captives, whom the chances of war had reduced to slavery.

Always blending his endeavours to relieve their temporal distresses, with care for the souls of the people, Severin deposited whatever food or money he could collect, from time to time, in some church of the neighbourhood. Then, summoning the inhabitants around him, he offered up solemn prayer, and commenced his distribution, pronouncing the words, "The Lord's name be praised," and adding such exhortations as he thought best suited to the occasion. Many instances of the efficacy of his prayers are recorded. Thus at one time, he

enabled a few soldiers to overcome a powerful band of robbers, and recover the whole of the little property which the marauders had carried off from a wretched village; at another, he so wrought upon the mind of a barbarian captain, that he ceased from executing a project, which must have reduced the province to a still more deplorable state of desolation.

Severin continued to carry on these labours for many years. He was, therefore, enabled to accomplish much towards evangelizing the tribes inhabiting the banks of the Danube. But the fame of his labours and successes excited many men, endowed with a like spirit, to attempt similar undertakings. Thus St. Goar, taking up his abode on the shores of the Rhine, and where the scenery is so wildly beautiful that it still inspires the traveller with a feeling of religious delight, subdued the warlike people to the yoke of the gospel. The same work of conversion was effected for the inhabitants of Triers by the pious Wulfach. Awakened by his voice to a sense of the folly and wickedness of idolatry, the conscience-stricken people cast aside the images of their gods, and eagerly embraced the cross, as their only shield against the power of evil.

The Irish missionaries of these times are represented as exhibiting the most striking proofs of religious devotion, combined with profound learning and wisdom. Among these celebrated men, Columban occupies a distinguished place. Having acquired the highest qualifications for the work of a missionary, by long study, and the practice of holiness, he left the monastery in which he had spent his youth, and travelled into France. He was accompanied by twelve young men, pious and learned, like himself. With these companions he took up his abode in a wild

part of the district of the Vosges. Their only shelter was a ruined castle ; and so scanty was the food supplied them from the distant villages, that they were often obliged to still the cravings of hunger by eating the bark of trees, or the weeds which grew among the rocks. But this painful mode of life prepared Columban and his followers for the system which it was his wish to establish. The monks of his order were taught to labour continually for their own support ; to earn something additional, if possible, to aid the poor ; and to show themselves patterns in all things of humility and self-denial. But however severe the rules by which Columban governed his monks, he manifested his wisdom by insisting, that they should neither labour, nor practise mortifications, in any way likely to prove injurious to health or strength.

Had Columban been permitted to carry on his pious designs, the surrounding provinces would have derived permanent benefit from the revival of pure Christianity, where it had been already planted, and from the extension of the gospel to those districts which had not received it. But the strictness of his doctrine and discipline excited the jealousy of many of the monks and clergy. The severity with which he had the boldness to address them, the stern reproofs with which he assailed their laxity and their vices, filled them with indignation. A powerful party was formed against him ; and he was, at length, compelled to leave the country. Followed by some few devoted companions, he directed his steps towards Italy. In his journey, however, he passed through a part of Switzerland, which appeared to offer him opportunities of usefulness. He accordingly took up his abode for three years in the neighbourhood of Bregenz, on the shores of the Lake of Constance. There

the simple inhabitants of the surrounding country flocked in crowds to hear his discourses. His humility and benevolence deeply moved the hearts of these people ; and he had the happiness to find that the gospel was daily becoming more familiar and precious to their ears.

But at the end of the time mentioned, the party which had so long watched his progress with feelings of hatred, found means to drive him from the scene of his useful labours. Yielding to the storm, he again set forth on his wanderings, and, still travelling towards Italy, came at last to Pavia, where he founded a monastery, and entered with great earnestness upon the work of correcting the errors which the Arians, and other heretics, had introduced among the Christians of Lombardy. The epistle which he addressed to Boniface IV. affords a curious specimen of the freedom with which a man like Columban could, in those days, exhort and admonish even the head of the Roman church.

Columban had for his constant companion a monk named Gallus, who shared his toils and dangers ; and was, like his master, wholly devoted to the task of making the gospel known to the ignorant, or in correcting the views of those who knew it only in a corrupt form. Sickness at length obliged Gallus to leave Columban, whose frequent journeys were too fatiguing for the weaker frame of his companion. The devout monk, however, resolved not to allow this circumstance to prevent his still doing something for Christ and his people. He determined to preach the gospel around the shores of the Lake, and to imbue the poor fishermen with such a knowledge of the truth, as should enable them to instruct others in the same divine science. Employing what little strength he possessed, he began to traverse a thick and

extensive forest, which covered a large portion of the district. The deacon Hiltibad, who accompanied him, represented the numerous dangers which would attend such a journey. He spoke of the beasts of prey which haunted the glens and thickets ; of the difficulty of tracing the path leading to the other side of the wood ; and of still worse perils, the ready creation of men's fancies in those times of growing superstition.

But Gallus was not to be deterred from his design. To all the gloomy representations of his friend, he answered, —“ If God be for us, who can be against us ? He who saved Daniel in the den of lions, can also deliver us from the beasts of the forest.” Having penetrated some hours' journey into the wood, Hiltibad prayed Gallus to pause, and partake of the contents of their scrip. But he refused, and expressed his intention to wander on, till he found some spot where he might finally take up his rest. They accordingly pursued their journey, till the setting sun warned them of the necessity of preparing for the approach of night. The part of the forest which they had now reached was well fitted for the repose of weary travellers. Moss-covered rocks offered a shelter from the storm ; and a little river running at their feet, and well furnished with fish, promised the wanderers a plentiful repast. Hiltibad had spent many years in the neighbourhood, and was skilled in all the arts which may minister comfort to a life of solitude. He soon proved to Gallus his ability as an angler ; and, collecting fuel from the forest, the flame of a cheerful fire speedily gave to the wild scenes around them an aspect of comfort and repose. Gallus knelt down with the desire of offering up his prayers to heaven, before partaking of the meal, which his companion had spread before him. In kneeling he

wounded himself with a thorn-bush. The pain which he felt would not allow him to rise. Hiltibad hastened to his help ; but he refused to accept his aid ; and, stretching himself on the earth, declared that he regarded the circumstance as an omen ; and that as he had been there cast down, he would make the spot his final resting-place, and there endeavour to glorify God, and work out his own salvation.

Gallus was faithful to the resolution thus formed. He established a monastery in the forest, and the pious men whom he gathered together became patient and faithful teachers of the surrounding villages.

From the congregations of humble believers which were thus raised up, many were prepared to hand down the truths of the gospel to another generation. The bishopric of Constance fell vacant while Gallus was at the height of his popularity. He refused the proffered dignity ; but asked it for his friend, the deacon Johannes. The consecration of the new bishop was attended by multitudes of people from far and near ; and the venerable Gallus addressed them in a discourse well calculated to make a profound impression on their hearts. At its conclusion, he said, " We have shown you how God has carried on the plan of salvation from the fall of man until now, and, unworthy servants as we are of this gospel, in these our times, we adjure you, in the name of Christ, that as by baptism you have renounced the devil and all his works, you may evermore continue to oppose him, and live as it becometh the children of God. And may the Almighty, who willeth that all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth, and who hath imparted this to your ears by the service of my tongue,—may He himself, through his grace, render it fruitful in your hearts !"

Gallus lived till about the middle of the seventh century ; and he was succeeded by several other Irish monks, by whose piety and active wisdom Switzerland, Alsace, and a large portion of Suabia, were made acquainted with the gospel.

Germany was thus peculiarly favoured by the number and devotion of the missionaries sent to evangelize her people. They were chiefly from England or Ireland ; and there seems reason to believe that the doctrine of the earliest of these teachers was less infected with earthly superstition than that of ecclesiastics from other countries. Of those whose names have come down to us as most deserving of remembrance, Boniface, who has been called the apostle of Germany, claims especial mention. Not, however, so much on account of the pure evangelical character of his teaching, as on that of his sincerity and devotion.

This celebrated man, was born at Kirton, in Devonshire, about the year 680. His proper name was Winfrid ; and his family is supposed to have enjoyed some degree of distinction in their native place. Having been imbued with all the learning of the age, he felt himself so deeply impressed by the discourses of the monks who preached occasionally in the neighbourhood, that he earnestly entreated his parents to permit him to join their order. After some resistance on the part of his friends, he was allowed to adopt the course which Providence and his own feelings seemed to point out. The discipline of the monastery ; the time which he there enjoyed for reading, meditation, and prayer, produced the fruits which might be looked for in such a mind. Winfred became daily more devout, and he felt inspired with an irresistible desire to engage in the duties of a missionary. Obeying the impulse by which he was moved, he set out for

Friesland ; but the war which raged at the time, and the generally unsettled state of the provinces to which he directed his steps, obliged him to return. The death of the abbot during his absence, had left the monks at liberty to offer him the vacant dignity. But Winfrid refused the proffered appointment ; and as soon as circumstances would allow, he again bade his brethren farewell, and set out for Rome. He there explained his views to the reigning pontiff, Gregory II. His ardour affected the pope. The letters which he brought spoke in glowing terms of his virtue and ability ; and Gregory, therefore, did not hesitate to trust him with one of the most important undertakings of a missionary character known in the age. This was the conversion of the Germans ; only some tribes of whom had heard the gospel, or retained any knowledge of the doctrines which had been taught their forefathers.

Armed with the commission of the pope, and the authority which it gave him, Boniface* proceeded to Thuringia. His success answered to his zeal. He founded several new religious establishments ; and the cause of holiness seems to have prospered greatly through his labours.

He had now tried his strength ; and his success induced him to aim at still higher objects. Before, however, attempting anything further, he deemed it wise to seek the approval of the Roman pontiff, whose increasing power rendered it necessary even for the most devoted of teachers to ask his blessing and co-operation in their work. Boniface easily obtained his wish in this respect.

* He either assumed this name when he became a monk, or it was given him by the pope. Either was according to the custom of the times.

Gregory III, who was now on the papal throne, not only gave him authority to preach the gospel in Germany, but consecrated him as bishop of the new diocese, which it was hoped he might be enabled to establish on the banks of the Rhine. In return for the favour with which he was thus received, Boniface bound himself by a solemn oath to live and labour in strict allegiance to the Roman church; to obey the pope, and his successors; to hold no intercourse with their enemies; but to oppose, by every means in his power, whatever was done in contradiction to their will, or the rule or faith of the Roman see.

It has been well observed,* in reference to this transaction, that Boniface was now called upon to determine whether he would establish the German church according to the plan traced out for it by Rome; or whether he would follow the example of other British and Irish missionaries, and preach the gospel, and raise his institutions, in simple obedience to the free spirit of truth and holiness. The oath by which he pledged himself to keep in strict communion with the Roman church; to support its interests, and oppose its enemies wherever they might be found, gives us sufficient intimation of the part which he adopted. But it may be questioned whether we ought to conclude from this, that he undertook his mission to Germany not simply for the conversion of the heathen, but for the recovery of heretics, who were regarded as such only because they were not in communion with Rome. There was an earnestness and devotion in his character which lead us to believe that whatever might be his subsequent proceedings, his original idea was the

* Neander Allgemeine Geschichte, b. iii. p. 67.

fruit of pure love for souls, and of the noblest desire for their salvation.

Whatever the difficulties, or opposition, which Boniface may have had to encounter at the beginning of his career, his success was sufficient to satisfy the most ardent mind. By the year 739, he had baptized nearly a hundred thousand of the heathen inhabitants of Germany. It has been suggested, that he probably owed a part of this success to the aid given him by the temporal power ; but there is no good reason for such a supposition. His fervent zeal was an instrument sufficiently powerful to enable him to work on the minds of a rude and ignorant people. The use which he made of his influence with the princes who admired his piety, was merely to protect himself against the machinations of rival missionaries and monks, the representatives, it seems, of a once powerful, but now decayed, and ineffective party.

The command which Boniface exercised on the minds of his new converts, is illustrated by the bold attacks which he made on every remnant of the heathen worship. Thus having beheld with disgust the veneration which was still displayed towards an ancient oak, dear to the pagan gods, he exhorted the people either to cease from the vain ceremonies, with which they expressed their love for this relic of former ages, or to resign it to the woodman's axe. But his exhortations were addressed to deaf ears. He, therefore, resolved that the oak should be felled without further delay. Taking with him some few of his trusty followers, he proceeded to the tree. A multitude of the heathen, and of those who were still only imperfectly converted, anticipated his design, and were there before him. But, nothing daunted, the bold missionary lifted up the huge axe which he carried in his hand.

and having inflicted a heavy stroke on the tree, awaited the threatened vengeance of the gods. The bystanders were astonished to find that no dreadful indication of divine wrath attended the impious attack. They were still more so when the mighty tree soon after lay extended on the earth, cleft into four parts. For a little while, opposite feelings contended in their minds. Boniface seized the advantage which he had gained ; and addressing them in language, and with arguments, adapted to their capacity, brought the whole multitude to confess that they had been deceived by their former faith, and that there was but one true God in heaven, the Father of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world.

It appears, however, that ready as Boniface might be to avail himself of any of the helps which Rome or the surrounding princes could afford him, he was diligent in the use of those means, which could alone avail to the effectual conversion of the people. The study of Scripture formed an important part of his own employment. Thus he entreated his old friend, the abbess Eadburga, to order a copy of the Epistle of St. Peter to be made for him. It was to be written in letters of gold ; and one of the reasons which he gave for desiring it in this gorgeous form was, that he intended to use it in preaching to the people. There was something in this strangely contrasted with his simple wish to found whatever he said on the authority of God's word. The people, he intimated in his letter to Eadburga, would be inspired with reverence for Scripture when they beheld it thus written in gold ; and they would bow the more readily to the authority of the apostle, whose messenger he was, on seeing his words embodied in such a form. But in other instances we find him only expressing his anxiety to have copies of

different books of Scripture written in large, distinct characters, that his weak eyes might not be distressed in reading them. A copy of the prophetical books, written by the abbot Wimbert, in clear, well-formed characters, was among those which he most prized.

In the 'course of about fifteen years, Boniface had converted a hundred thousand natives of Germany, and established among them a proportionable number of churches, monasteries, and other religious institutions. This great work had been accomplished in the midst of opposition and difficulties. The notices which remain of the conduct of the earlier British and Irish missionaries, are not, perhaps, to be wholly believed. But they indicate the rapid decline of piety on the one hand, and of an increasing tendency to ecclesiastical tyranny and superstition on the other. Boniface complained to his friends, at home, that he found the clergy leading the most unspiritual lives; amusing themselves with hunting and other sports; taking part in wars; and making a gain of their spiritual functions with little regard to the welfare or improvement of the people. The chief remedy for all these disorders seemed to consist, according to Boniface, in subjecting both the clergy and people to the power of Rome. Feeling it his duty to obey the injunctions of the pope, in the most literal sense, he would at first hold no intercourse of any kind with the missionaries who disputed his supreme authority. The politic advice which he received from the papal court, tended to soften the severity of his sentiments in this respect. "Admonish," it was said to him, "such of the clergy as disgrace their profession by their lives. Exhort them by the authority of Rome, to cease from their evil practices. But even should they refuse to hear you, do not avoid

meeting or conversing with them at public feasts ; for it often happens, that men allow themselves to be persuaded at such times, however obstinately they may oppose the severity of a rebuke." *

In the year 738, Boniface again resolved to visit Rome. Gregory III. received him with the honour due to so faithful a servant of the church, and so zealous a preacher of the truth. Before his return to Germany, he conferred on him very extended powers, and submitted to his jurisdiction, not only the missionaries and clergy, with whom he had been in conflict, but the whole of Bavaria, in respect to all the arrangements which might be made for its future religious state. Endowed with this vast authority, Boniface immediately founded four bishoprics in Bavaria, those of Saltzburg, Ratisbonne, Freisingen, and Passau. Two other sees were soon after founded ; and the whole of Germany began to wear the appearance of a country long subjected to the salutary rules of church discipline. Political changes still further aided the designs of Boniface. Charles Martel, the famous mayor of the palace, had treated the approaches of the Roman missionary with haughty suspicion. He favoured his efforts to plant Christianity among the German tribes ; but he would not suffer him unresisted to assume the power which he pretended to exercise as the representative of the Roman pontiff. The successors of Charles Martel stood in a different relation to the church. While Carloman resigned his share of the royal power, that he might devote himself wholly to the exercises of piety, Pepin was obliged to justify his assumption of the

* " Plerumque enim contingit, ut quos correctio disciplinæ tardos, facit ad percipiendam veritatis normam, conviviorum sedulitas et admonitio disciplinæ ad viam perducatur justitiæ."—Epis. xxiv.

titles, as well as the rights of royalty, by an appeal to the pope. Boniface soon felt that the sceptre was wielded by a hand less firm than that of the former mayor of the palace. He was more free to adopt measures for the advancement of those interests which he believed to be identical with the advancement of the gospel itself.* Thus, besides erecting several episcopal sees, he undertook to summon synods, and to enact in these assemblies whatever appeared calculated to promote the power which he was so anxious to establish.

Suspiciously as many statesmen, and even churchmen, might have looked at these proceedings on the part of Boniface, they were, in many respects, calculated to produce salutary effects among the people for whom they were undertaken. However zealous the earlier missionaries, there is too much reason to fear, that the good which they accomplished among their contemporaries, ceased with the age on which it was bestowed. An important lesson was thereby taught the faithful followers of Christ. The fruit of labours, commenced and carried on in the purest spirit, was lost, or never brought to maturity, for want of regular husbandry, or because there was no garner in which to store it. Had the church been established, according to apostolic rule, among the people whom Boniface undertook to instruct, a generation would have grown up ready to contend for the faith which had been taught in the country, in primitive times, and too

* Thus he says, "Carolomanus me accersitum ad se rogavit, ut in parte regni Francorum, quæ in sua est potestate, synodum facerem congregari, et promisit, se de ecclesiastica religione, quæ jam longo tempore, id est, non minus quam per sexaginta vel septuaginta annos calcata et dissipata fuit, aliquid corrigere et emendare velle."—Epis. li.

well supported by the rich associations of those past ages, to listen complacently to the claims of other churches, or other systems. But it was not so ; and Boniface in proportion to his anxiety to establish the knowledge of divine truth permanently in the land, could not but perceive the necessity of making some provision for the spiritual government of those who owned the authority of the gospel. The bishoprics which he established ; the numerous synods which he held, all served this wise and necessary purpose. But they were also a source of evils foreseen by some of the wisest men of the age ; and the dread of which induced them to regard Boniface, whatever his benevolence, piety, and other Christian virtues, as an enemy of evangelical purity and freedom.

Among those who thus viewed his proceedings, two were especially conspicuous. These were Adelbert and Clemens, men of learning and ability, and superior to most of their contemporaries, as keen observers and critics of ecclesiastical systems. It appears from the brief notices which exist of Adelbert, that he desired to defend the gospel against the invasion both of ecclesiastical power and ecclesiastical tradition. He spoke with contempt of the pilgrimages to Rome, which were now beginning to be regarded as works of piety. The practice of confession seems to have been as little favoured by him ; and from other circumstances of this kind we may conclude, that he was strongly imbued with what, in that age, must have given him the character either of an infidel or a fanatic. Many of the observances which he rejected were sacred in the eyes of the Roman missionaries ; while his assumption of a purely spiritual calling ; his pretension to independence, and even to the dignity of the prophetic office, place him in the light not of a simple,

ingenuous reformer, but of a bold and skilful leader, whose piety was at least equalled by his ambition. That which most justifies this view of his character, is the apparently well-supported fact, that he pretended to the possession of relics which gave him a supernatural power, and enabled him to work miracles both for himself and others. Among his followers, no doubt was entertained of the truth of his assertions in this respect ; and in so rude an age as that in which he lived, the reputation which he thence acquired gave him unbounded influence.

It was almost impossible for Boniface not to view such a man as Adelbert with mingled dislike and fear. There were even contrasts of character between them, sufficient to account for the hostility which marked their subsequent proceedings. Adelbert's enthusiasm led him to believe in his own especial designation to the missionary or even prophetic office. Boniface, on the contrary, though actuated by the most ardent courage, and proving throughout life his devotion to the cause which he had embraced, never entertained the idea that he was miraculously qualified for his great undertaking ; but satisfied himself, as it has been observed,* with following the dictates of powerful good sense, and the ordinary influence of the Divine Spirit.

Another missionary, from Ireland, was equally opposed to the proceedings of Boniface, and rendered himself no less formidable by the purer spirituality of his sentiments, than Adelbert by his enthusiasm and lofty pretensions. This pious teacher of the gospel was known by the name of Clemens. He insisted upon the sufficiency of Scripture, as the only pure fountain of divine knowledge,

* Neander. Allgemeine Geschichte, b. iii p. 83.

in contradiction to the growing opinion of the age, that traditions and the decrees of councils were no less necessary than the word of God for the instruction of the church. While this opinion was in direct opposition to the principles inculcated by Boniface, and, if received, must have proved an effectual hindrance to the development of some of his favourite plans, the secular life which Clemens, though elevated to the episcopal dignity, led, was even still more offensive than the notions which he entertained, and wished to see generally established.

Clemens had a wife and children. The language in which Boniface speaks of these domestic relations of the good bishop, betrays a feeling which nothing but the dark spirit of a rude intolerance could have inspired.

It was evident to Boniface that so long as men like Adelbert and Clemens were allowed to exercise unrestricted influence among the people, it would be vain for him to expect the permanent success of his present designs. The character of his and their system of teaching, could never be the same. Their principles belonged to a different system; the one or the other must conquer. They could not exist together. But it required little foresight to determine which, in the present circumstances of the church and the world, might confidently be expected to gain the victory. Boniface had imbibed, with other opinions of Roman growth, the stern conviction that force ought to be employed, where persuasion could not avail, to silence the voice or stop the machinations of heresy. With this view he appealed to the pontiff respecting Adelbert and Clemens; and representing their principles and character in the most unfavourable light, begged that means might be employed for securing their persons, and casting them into prison.

But Zachary, the reigning pope, was a man of amiable disposition ; generous and enlightened. He had not advanced so far as Boniface in the theory which set at nought the common rights of men in their character of citizens and Christians. The answer which he returned to the favoured and powerful missionary, betokens the perplexity which pontiffs of his character must at all times have experienced when thus appealed to. There was a painful struggle in his mind between the ecclesiastical notions of his age, and the plain convictions of his own mind and heart. The conflict ended in a species of compromise. He answered Boniface by expressing his displeasure at the doctrines upheld by Adelbert and Clemens ; and directed that they should be degraded from their rank in the church. But he, at the same time, declared his unwillingness that any force should be employed against their persons.

This, considering the character of the times, was a mild judgment. But it obtained little favour with Boniface, or his party. He continued to make fresh representations to the pope of the proceedings of the accused bishops. At the end of about two years, Zachary was persuaded to reconsider his judgment. It is difficult to determine what fresh proofs he received of the dangerous nature of the doctrines taught by Adelbert or Clemens ; but he now directed that, if they allowed themselves to be convinced of their error, they should be treated with becoming moderation ; whereas if they persevered in their present course, they should be sent to Rome, that they might there be judged and punished according to the proofs of their guilt. It is not clearly known what proceedings were taken on the receipt of the pontiff's epistle. The fate of Clemens is involved in obscurity ; but Adel-

bert, according to the wish of Boniface, was apprehended, and made a close prisoner in the monastery of Fulda. After a long captivity, he at length escaped, and commenced his journey towards some place of refuge, with only a few nuts to support him on the way. He had not, however, travelled far, when he was met by some herdsmen, who falling upon him cruelly beat and murdered him.

But ready as Boniface was to make his appeal to the Roman pontiff, and profound as was the respect which he expressed for his authority, the power to which he had attained in Germany appears to have fostered, in no slight degree, the natural firmness of his character. Thus examples are given of the freedom with which he expressed his sentiments even to the pope himself. It had become a practice with the court of Rome to demand a certain fee on bestowing the pall upon any of its favoured prelates. Boniface wrote to Zachary on the subject, and declared in strong and severe language, that the ministers of the church were guilty of simony in permitting such a custom. He even accused the Roman clergy of favouring superstition and fraud by some of the ceremonies which were allowed in the capital; by the display of charms and amulets, and other vain usages, which being witnessed by the rude people occasionally visiting Rome, tended to the general diffusion of most dangerous follies and corruptions.* Zachary, it appears, did not deny the existence of such abuses; but he asserted his own disgust at the evils thus introduced, and declared that he had used his authority to suppress them. Boniface was

* "Quæ omnia eo, quod ibi carnalibus et insipientibus videntur, nobis hic et improprium et impedimentum prædicationis et doctrinæ perficiunt."—Epis. li.

satisfied with this assurance ; but he continued to press upon the pontiff the necessity of a far more general reformation. He represented to him the importance of establishing a system which should secure the ready correction of error, and the punishment of vice, among the clergy. For this purpose he laboured to erect certain great metropolitan sees, the possessors of which were to receive the appeals of the neighbouring bishops ; to settle disputes ; award punishments ; and perform all those high functions which seemed necessary to a perfect system of ecclesiastical government and discipline.

The wisdom of these measures seemed evident to those who were more anxious to correct the licentious temper which manifested itself from time to time, than fearful of creating a power which might soon suppress the vital movements of a free, religious spirit. There were some, however, who dreaded such a result to the proceedings of Boniface. They knew the tendency of power in the church to corrupt those who possessed it, without the chance of spiritualizing those who were the objects of its exercise.* In the course of a few hundred years, the most flagrant examples had been displayed of pride, licentiousness, ambition, and revenge on the part of bishops and metropolitans ; and the fruits of their elevation ; of their enormous endowments ; of the subjection of the clergy to their haughty sway, were of such a doubtful character, that men devoted to the pure interests of Christ's church might well hesitate before they gave their assent to measures which they were to execute. Unhappily, but little evidence exists to prove that the episcopal

* Boniface speaks most contemptuously of those who opposed his plans : "*Quidam falsi sacerdotes et schismatici hoc impedire conati sunt.*"

dignity has acquired any additional worth, any increase of real splendour, by the worldly means taken to aggrandise its possessors. The most striking instances have been given of the contrary fact. Venerable as is the name of bishop in the apostolic church; ready as the members of Christ's mystical body have shown themselves to honour the office; to respect its rightful power; to own it as a channel of grace; as an appointed means for the transmission of knowledge and evidence,—ready as Christians have generally been to regard episcopacy in itself as a noble part of the evangelical machinery, they have assuredly had no reason to admire the wisdom of those monarchs and statesmen who, by pampering the pride of bishops, have marred the bishopric of souls.

A curious illustration may be given of the feelings which existed among the German prelates of this age. The only question is, whether by altering the channel by which the pride, or other passions, of the human heart find vent, the passions themselves are in any wise improved, or subdued. In the year 744, Gerald, who held the important see of Maynz, joined a body of troops which had been raised to oppose an invasion of the Saxons. He appeared armed in the field, and was slain by one of the Saxon warriors. The see of Maynz, being thus left vacant, Carloman immediately gave it to the son of the warlike prelate. Gewillieb, the name of the new bishop, although not accused of any particular vice, had no pretensions to such a dignity. He was unacquainted with religious learning; was devoted to the ordinary pleasures of secular life; and, like his father, delighted in the excitement of camps and battle fields. Disregarding, therefore, the immediate calls of his new function, he resolved to avenge the death of his father.

Attended by a fitting retinue, and armed like the other warriors of the age, he hastened to the scene of strife. No sooner were the two armies drawn out in battle array, than Gewillieb formally summoned the chief who had slain his father to single combat. The challenge was answered. A fierce conflict ensued ; and the bishop laid his antagonist dead on the ground.

This occurrence was but in harmony with the common spirit of the age ; and Gewillieb in yielding to the impulses of his filial affection, only proved that the idea of episcopal holiness or gravity, in his mind, was not answerable to the primitive or original type. But though thus unlike its proper pattern, it was not more unlike than many other ideas which have been formed respecting the episcopal character, or its proper virtues ; and, although Boniface doubtless performed a good work in adopting measures for suppressing such proceedings on the part of bishops, it is not equally certain that he inspired them by his rules with any motives to a more spiritual conduct. Gewillieb was deprived of his see. His appeal to Rome proved unsuccessful ; and Boniface accomplished such arrangements respecting the two great sees of Cologne and Maynz, as seemed to promise many advantages for the better government of the church.

With all the severity and haughtiness with which this remarkable man appeared to carry on his designs, he was far from losing those more amiable qualities of character which originally induced him to undertake the mission into Germany. Thus he never ceased to contemplate the conversion of the heathen as the grand aim of his labours. The possession of power and dignity was nothing in his eyes, but as it might assist him in the accomplishment of this object ; and when the question

arose, where the seat of archiepiscopal rule could best be fixed, and how his own grandeur and authority might be most effectually consulted, he entreated to be allowed to resign the dignity for that of a simple bishopric, which would leave him more at liberty to preach to the heathen, and perform those other duties which might tend to their more speedy conversion. But it was only with great difficulty that Boniface could persuade the pope to listen to his request on this subject; and all that he obtained was, the permission to consecrate an associate bishop, on whom he might repose the more burdensome duties of his station.* This, however, encouraged him to hope that some few years of profitable repose might be allowed to his old age. He took immediate measures for putting his favourite monastery of Fulda in repair, and looked forward to the time when he might retire to its quiet cells, and wander undisturbed among its solemn woods and valleys, with almost the same feelings as a traveller longs for the day when he shall reach his home.

Anxious as Boniface was to obtain this freedom from the cares of an archbishopric, he had lost none of his zeal or anxiety for the promotion of the great cause which had so long engaged his thoughts.* From the monastery of Fulda, he hoped to be able to exercise an influence on the surrounding districts, not less beneficial or effectual because it proceeded from his humble cell, instead of a castle, or a palace. "I will endeavour," he said, in his letter to the pope, "to be useful as long as I live, to the poor people to whom by the grace of God I have preached the gospel. They inhabit districts which lie in a circle

* Lull, an English priest, who became his associate, had been for years his constant friend and companion. He says of him, "*Habet secreta quædam mea, quæ soli pietati vestræ profiteri debet.*"—Epis. 86.

round Fulda, and it is my earnest desire to continue to serve the Romish church among the Germans, to whom I have been sent; and to evidence my obedience to your commands."

The retreat in Fulda afforded the only prospect of repose which Boniface dare contemplate as consistent with this unwavering devotion to his early vows. Ardent in his nature and affections, his thoughts continually reverted to his native country; and he more than once formed the design of again visiting its shores.* But the infirmities of age rendered it impossible for him to accomplish this object, without the sacrifice of that which lay still nearer his heart, the confirmation of his adopted country in the faith of Christ. He was, therefore, obliged to content himself with employing whatever means he possessed for doing good to the English church at a distance. His correspondence with its clergy, and the most pious members of the monastic orders, was very extensive. The intelligence which he occasionally received of the disorders introduced by the vices of the princes, or the corruptions of the clergy themselves, filled him with sorrow; and his letters breathe the devoted spirit of a man who, erring as he might in some points, could regard nothing as important in comparison with the interests of holiness. It is equally interesting and affecting to see how carefully he surveyed the whole circle over which he could exercise any influence for good, when he believed his days were drawing to a close.† His chief anxiety

* "*Bonis et laudibus gentis nostræ latamur; peccatis et vituperationibus contristamur.*"—Epis. 71.

† "*Mihi et amicis meis similiter videtur, ut vitam istam temporalem et cursum dierum meorum per istas infirmitates cito debeam finire.*"—Epis. 90.

was to secure the appointment of a successor to his see, on whose piety and other good qualities he could safely rely. This had formed the subject of one of his most earnest appeals to the Roman pontiff; and he now sought the aid of king Pepin to place the desired arrangement beyond danger of change. With this view, he addressed a letter to the royal chaplain, Fulrad; and entreated him to exercise his powerful influence with the monarch to confirm the nomination of Lull to the office which his daily expected death would leave vacant. "Almost all my scholars," said the venerable archbishop, "are foreigners. Some of them are priests, employed in different places, in the service of the church; others are monks, distributed among the convents, and engaged in instructing the children to read; and others are now aged, having passed the better part of their lives with me, sharing my labours, and comforting me by their affection and sympathy. I am very anxious for all these, lest after my death they should be scattered like sheep without a shepherd, and lest the people on the borders of the heathen, should be deprived thereby of the law of Christ. Therefore do I entreat you to afford them your protection; and I pray you, in the name of God, to see that my son and fellow-bishop, Lull, be appointed to this service among the people, and the churches, as minister and teacher both of the priests and the congregation. And, I hope, if it be God's will, that the priests will find in him a leader; the monks, a teacher in their rules; and the Christian people, a true preacher and shepherd. I pray this especially, because my priests have a sad life on the borders of the heathen. Bread they can earn for themselves; but they cannot obtain clothes, unless they continue to receive the aid which I have afforded them, so

as to render their persevering in the service of these places possible."

The deep feeling of regard which he entertained for the people among whom he first laboured as a missionary, had suffered no diminution through length of time, or from the variety of occupations in which he had since been engaged. He still looked upon them with the tender affection of a father; and his anxiety on their behalf overpowered, in the end, every other consideration. Fondly as he had contemplated those days of repose which he hoped to spend in the monastery of Fulda, he resolved to sacrifice the ease, which his increasing infirmities rendered so necessary, to the desire of once more proclaiming, with his own voice, the precious words of life to the people of Friesland. At the beginning of the year 755, bowed down as he was with years, the aged missionary commenced his journey to that province. The severity of the weather, and the roughness of the roads, might well have deterred a far younger man from such an undertaking; but he went forth in the spirit of true devotion; and, conscious as he was that he should never return,* he took an affectionate farewell of his intended successor, commending to him the care of his beloved people, and desiring him to finish the building of the church at Fulda, in which he begged that his remains might be deposited, whenever his death should take place.

Attended by a little retinue of faithful followers, Boniface proceeded along the Rhine, and landed at Zuydersee.

* He carried a shroud with him. This was carefully deposited in a case of books, which always formed part of his travelling equipage. "*Quocunque ibat, semper libros secum gestabat. Iter agendo vero vel Scripturas lectitabat, vel psalmos hymnosve canebat.*"

Having reposed there a little while, he continued his progress through the district, and was hailed by vast multitudes of the people as a messenger of God and salvation. Many thousands rejoicingly received baptism at his hands; and, wisely desiring to give them time to meditate on the course which they had taken, and to lay to heart the admonitions with which he had accompanied the sacred rite, Boniface had dismissed the newly-baptized to their homes, appointing a certain time when they were again to assemble around him, and receive, with confirmation, some further instruction in the faith. The day appointed was the fifth of June; and in the interval, the venerable missionary remained, with his companions, quietly spending his time on the banks of the river Burda, where they had pitched some tents for their habitation.

It was with intense joy and thankfulness that Boniface saw the day dawn which was to bring his faithful children back to him, and to witness their admission, as devout, persevering believers, into the bosom of Christ's church. The sun had scarcely risen when a sound was heard in the distance of gathering multitudes. Full of soul-felt delight, the aged bishop hastened to the door of his tent. There he stood, listening to the murmurs which indicated the rapid approach of the people. At length they might be seen hurrying along, as if impatient for the blessing of their spiritual father. But swords and spears soon became visible. Loud and threatening voices were heard, which seemed never to have been softened into prayer. The terrible fact was at once revealed to Boniface, and his companions. Instead of the expected throng of pious converts, there were now before them a host of the most barbarous of the inhabitants of the country, who still persisted in the worship of their idols. Inflamed almost

to madness by the effects which they saw attending the preaching of Boniface, they had resolved upon changing the triumph which he was hoping to consummate, into a scene of bloodshed. The character of their intentions was at once evident. Some of the servants and others attendant upon the bishop, proposed to defend him with their weapons; but he refused to accept a chance of safety at the expense of Christian meekness and resignation. Taking, therefore, some relics in his hand, he quietly awaited the attack of the barbarians. The brief interval allowed, he employed in exhorting his companions to act as became men who had so little reason to fear those who, though they might kill the body, had no power to harm the soul. Strengthened in his own mind by the assurance that the glories of eternal life would speedily be revealed to him, and imparting a similar resolution to those around him by his prayers and conversation, the hour was still one of triumph to him. The swords of the barbarians were bathed in the blood of men whose death, so calm and happy, rebuked the heathenism of their murderers as powerfully as their discourses. Boniface gained a real victory by his martyrdom. His name, venerable as it already was among those who were indebted for their knowledge of salvation to his preaching, became far more so when invested, as it now was, with the peculiar sanctity which belongs to that of a martyr.

To the great benefit of religion, Boniface had carefully instructed a large body of faithful men in the main principles of the gospel. Though not sufficiently powerful in mind, or spirit, to resist the common tendencies of his age, his sincere piety, and the degree of Scriptural knowledge to which he had attained, preserved him from the worst influences of error. Thus while he subjected the

portion of the church over which he presided to the domination of the Roman pontiffs, he hesitated to do aught which seemed inconsistent with the strictness of the gospel ; and though he venerated relics, and attended to observances which a spiritual rule of worship might well have spared, his constant study of the Scriptures ; his appeal to them in his discourses ; the anxiety with which he exhorted his scholars to look to them as the fountain of divine truth, must have served, in a most important degree, to preserve the people under his care from the trammels of superstition.

One of the most effective means that can be adopted for the diffusion of Christian knowledge, is the proper training of a sufficient number of wise and conscientious teachers. And this was the first care of Boniface. He established a regular system by which to provide for the necessities of the church, according to the character of its members, whether more or less advanced. The plan which he thus adopted was followed out by the most faithful of his associates. Thus an excellent school was established at Utrecht ; and from this seminary, priests and missionaries were readily supplied for all those various provinces, which were still divided between heathenism and Christianity.

At the head of the monastery in Utrecht, rendered thus valuable to the church at large, was one of the most devoted followers of the late archbishop. This was the abbot Gregory. He was the grandson of Addula, a woman of high rank, but who, retiring from the world, became abbess of the convent at Triers. Boniface, in one of his early missionary journeys, passing by this convent, was invited to repose there, and partake of its hospitality. During the meal, the grandson of the abbess, then a lad,

fourteen years of age, and just returned from school, was desired to read a portion of Scripture. Boniface praised his elocution, and asked him if he understood the meaning of what he had read. Gregory acknowledged he did not. Boniface then began to explain the purport of the chapter ; and his youthful hearer was so charmed with the force of his words, and the wonderful truths which they brought to his mind, that he declared aloud he would become his scholar, and attend him whithersoever he went. The abbess heard these expressions of her grandson's admiration with little pleasure. Boniface was a stranger ; and she exercised both persuasion and authority to deter Gregory from pursuing the resolution which he professed to have taken. But the impression made upon his mind was far too deep to be shaken. He implored her to let him have a horse for the journey ; and when she refused, he calmly told her, that he must then travel on foot, for that he was resolved not to lose the benefit of such instruction as that which the missionary Boniface could give him in the word of God.

Moved, at length, by the earnestness of the youth, so fervent and resolved in his determination, the abbess consented to let him accompany the stranger. She accordingly provided him with horses and servants, becoming his rank ; and the devoted lad set forth with Boniface, from whom he never afterwards separated, except when called upon to fulfil some task set him by his venerated master.

As head of the monastery at Utrecht, Gregory proved how nobly he had profited by the advantages, which he instinctively discovered he should enjoy, from the instruction of such a man as Boniface. Taking upon himself the charge of the mission in Friesland, he sent out

numerous preachers, well qualified for the task of converting the heathen, and confirming believers in their faith. Young men from all parts of Germany, and many from England and France, flocked to Utrecht that they might receive his instructions. These young men carried back to their respective countries a portion of that 'healthful knowledge, to the existence of which, in greater or less degrees of purity, we may ascribe the grand fact, that the light of truth has never been wholly extinguished.

The powerful and warlike Saxons still remained unconverted to the gospel. Their bold struggles with the armies of Charlemagne indicated the unbending character of their minds ; and the little hope which could be entertained of subjecting them to a new faith by force. But the victorious monarch, as he gained, from time to time, some partial successes against them, took immediate measures for establishing a church in their country, and that with all the accompaniments which belonged to it in provinces where the people, for ages, had been accustomed to its rule. The pious and enlightened Alcuin, whose mind was advanced far beyond the spirit of his age, entreated Charlemagne to adopt a course, which, while it would be more consistent with the nature of Christianity, would also be far more likely to secure success.

In a letter addressed to the chamberlain and treasurer of the monarch, he quotes the words of our Lord, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you."* On this he observes, that three things must be combined in order to bring men into a state of sal-

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

vation : The declaration of faith ; the administration of baptism ; and instruction in the commandments of the Lord. But faith, he adds, must be free, not compulsory. A man must be allured, not driven, into belief. So also with regard to baptism. A forced baptism can never lead to faith. Grown-up persons must answer for themselves as to what they believe, or wish ; and a false, or hypocritical profession of faith would prove that they had no proper desire of salvation. Preachers among the heathen, therefore, ought to instruct their hearers in the most friendly and cautious spirit ; and ever to bear in mind the example of Saint Paul, who gave milk to babes, and strong meat to those of larger growth. That great, and especially chosen, minister of the gospel to the gentiles, was most mindful to prohibit the love of gain in those who were engaged in the work of Christ. If they undertook the labour from any motive of this kind, they would necessarily labour without profit. But if, instead of seeking to impose upon the people the payment of tithes, and other such burdens, they only laid upon them the soft yoke, and the light burden of Christ, even the Saxons would then probably not refuse to be baptized. Let the teachers of the gospel, therefore, he said, follow the example of the apostles, and trust to the care of Him who told his first disciples to take neither scrip, nor money in their purse.

In writing to the emperor himself, Alcuin warned him against the evils of continuing to war against the Saxons, when peace was possible. And he especially reminded him, that if he employed force and persecution to make that people embrace the Christian faith, he would not profit, but rather injure, the church ; for by such a course he would rouse the angry spirit of the heathen, and tempt

them to let loose the fury of a retaliating persecution on those who had rejected idolatry for the true religion.

A. D.
804. At length, that is, at the beginning of the ninth century, the Saxon war was brought to a close by the complete triumph of the Frankish arms. Notwithstanding the prudent advice given by Alcuin, the most violent means were employed to oblige the conquered people to adopt the Christian faith. Still, in some of the laws passed for this purpose, we recognise the benignant spirit of the gospel, employed in delivering oppressed and suffering humanity from the grasp of the most barbarous superstition. Thus the offering of living human sacrifices was forbidden on pain of death; and all those other practices were abolished, which violated the common rights of nature. To have designated this as persecution, would have been to justify the worst species of tyranny to which mankind can be exposed, and to find fault with those whom Providence mercifully raises up to remove the scourge.

But it was not with suppressing the dark barbarities of heathenism that the conqueror satisfied himself. He obliged the unhappy people to adopt the whole system of the church, and inflicted the severest penalties on those who either ventured openly to resist, or by negligence violated, any of its laws, or rules of discipline. Had the Saxons been left for their conversion to the ministers of imperial power, they would have remained as ignorant of true Christianity as if they had never heard its name. But divine mercy provided them with far different teachers; and at their lips they learnt to distinguish between the rude instruments which God often employs to effect the visible part of his designs, and those by which He carries on the work of his spiritual kingdom. Liudger,

a man of eminent piety and considerable acquirements, engaged to preach the gospel to the bewildered Saxons. He had been brought up by Gregory at Utrecht ; and was prepared to encounter any difficulties, or bear any privations, so that he might but win souls to God. The scene of his earliest labours was the district in which the venerable Boniface had, but a short time before, sealed his testimony with his blood. After toiling for seven years in this perilous part of the country, he was compelled to retire, the tumults of war closing the ears of the people to the sound of the gospel. Having spent the interval in Italy, he returned at the conclusion of the war to the scene of his former labours. But his zeal and energy recommended him to the emperor, as a fitting teacher for the fierce Saxons. He was accordingly sent into the conquered provinces, and a vast body of the people gladly acknowledged the convincing force of his exhortations. Having long laboured with success among the flock thus assigned him, he founded a large monastic establishment at Munster, and thereby provided, according to the fashion of the age, for the continued instruction of the surrounding neighbourhood. He set an example to the members of this institution of the most faithful devotedness to his calling. On the Sunday, during the night of which he died, he preached twice, in two different parts of his district, and summoned his last remaining strength to administer the Eucharist.

Willehad was another missionary of similar character. He had also proved his courage by following in the footsteps of Boniface, and narrowly escaped the murderous swords of the Frieslanders. When Charlemagne was selecting preachers for the Saxons, Willehad was appointed, with episcopal rank, to the country about Bremen. His

labours, though interrupted by warlike outbreaks, were attended with great success ; and when his last sickness assailed him, both his brethren and the people wept his approaching departure with tears of ardent affection. "What will become of your flock, so lately gathered together ; and of your clergy, still young and inexperienced ?" exclaimed one of his followers, who stood bending over his couch. "O let me not be deprived any longer," replied the dying missionary, "of the sight of my Lord ! Fain would I behold Him whom I have ever loved with my whole heart ; and all I ask is, that He may grant me such a reward for my labours, as He in his grace and mercy may see fit. But as for my flock, I commend it, in full assurance, to his care ; for if I have myself ever done it any good, it has only been accomplished by the strength which He has given me. So neither will his grace be wanting to you ; for the whole earth is full of his mercy."

Such was the general character of the men employed in the conversion of the most important part of Europe, till now lying in heathen darkness. Whatever the indications which their words and actions occasionally afford, of a temper not wholly uninfluenced by the times, they were too much under the power of divine grace, were too plainly instruments in the hands of God, to be regarded otherwise than as faithful ministers of the word of life.

We know too little of the men employed in preaching the gospel in the distant countries of the East, to determine the real character, or actual results, of their labours. It is a well understood fact, however, that the missions established, at this period, for the conversion of the remote provinces of Asia and Africa, were founded by the Nestorians, or other bodies, separate from the Catholic church. But, imperfect as is the information which we pos-

ness respecting the undertakings thus commenced for the diffusion of the gospel, it can scarcely be doubted that, in many respects, they were the result of an earnest devotion to charity and holiness. Wherever the living element of evangelical truth prevailed over the depressing influences of schism, or those of that unhealthy habit of speculation so common in the East, there the blessing of God may be supposed to have attended the labours of the missionary,—the struggle in which he engaged with the power of ancient error. It is still, however, an important fact, that while the fruits of those great missionary undertakings, commenced and followed up by the acknowledged branches of the church, remain to this day, the lapse of ages has swept away almost all traces of what was done by other bodies of professing Christians. Here and there, indeed, we meet with some descendants of the Nestorians, but the state of their communities, their uncertain and confused history, indicates in a striking, and even affecting manner, the difference of their destiny, and that of the churches which have kept the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Early in the ninth century, Timotheus, patriarch of the Nestorians in Syria, displayed his devout and enterprising genius by sending missionaries to the furthest parts of the East Indies, and even into China. The fate of these undertakings is uncertain. They seem to have been attended, in the first instance, with some success; but the notices respecting them are too vague to be regarded in the light of history.

The difficulties attending the preaching of the gospel were in one remarkable respect daily decreasing; but, in another, they were greatly multiplied. By the establishment of an empire like that of Charlemagne, an inter-

course was promoted between different countries and provinces, which, in itself, was an important aid to the diffusion of truth and knowledge. The power, moreover, exercised by that monarch, gave facilities to those engaged in the work, enjoyed by none of their predecessors. Some of the Greek emperors were not wanting in a corresponding zeal for the prosperity of religion ; and though the good which they might have done was often marred by their own weakness, or by the ambition, or other vices of their bishops, the work went forward, and multitudes were made acquainted with the means of salvation, though churches were wasting the most precious opportunities of advancement.

But while the successful wars of Charlemagne opened a broad path for the Christian missionary, and lessened the difficulty of his labours by the protection which that monarch could afford him, it must not be lost sight of, that, in many cases, the hatred with which the name of the conqueror was regarded, more than counterbalanced the advantages bestowed by his power. Many of the vanquished tribes viewed Christianity only in the light of a religion professed by their enemies. By a species of fiction common to more enlightened people, they transferred the character of their conqueror to the faith which he desired them to accept at his hands. When the missionary, therefore, appeared among them, they saw in him another instrument of tyranny ; and it required all the powers of skilful persuasion, and the best efforts of Christian prudence, to induce them to listen to a message brought by so suspicious an agent.

Another large class of hinderances to the successful preaching of the gospel, was created by the change which had taken place in the views of its ministers. In the

early ages, one simple motive, one direct object, pointed out the path which they had to pursue. It was now far otherwise. The interests of the church, in its visible form, and ill-defined character of catholicity, were to be kept as prominently in sight, as those of the real kingdom of heaven, or the true communion of saints. It was no longer possible for the Christian teacher to confine himself to the subject which ought, at least for some time, to have engaged the sole attention of the convert. The idea of salvation was blended with confused notions of ecclesiastical power and dominion ; and when the soul of the trembling sinner was just beginning to find new light dawning upon it from heaven, the cheering ray was suddenly lost again in the broad shadow of some gigantic superstition.

Wonderful must it ever appear to reflecting minds, that with such antagonists to oppose its progress, the church of Christ could so successfully assert its genuine claims to universality ; that it was able to retain, amid all the revolutions of opinion, created by human pride or folly, its own pure body of truth ; and that while it often appeared lost amid the clouds or the stormy waves of this world's destiny, it so constantly shone forth again, as the appointed and faithful witness of eternal providence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE ROMAN PONTIFFS—STATE OF LEARNING
—ALCUIN—VENERABLE BEDÉ—SYSTEMS OF THEOLOGY—RABANUS MAURUS—SCOTUS ERIGENA—INCREASING DARKNESS
AND CORRUPTION.

WE can form but a very inadequate estimate of the benefits conferred by Charlemagne on his age. Striking proofs, however, exist of his desire to promote, according to the light which he possessed, the true interests of learning and religion. Like all other men, he was naturally swayed by the circumstances in which he was placed, by the conflict of different interests, and the power of contemporary opinions and prejudices. But as far as he could discover what were the proper objects of religion, he seems to have endeavoured to promote them by all the means at his command. The success of his arms was ever followed by some strenuous effort to enlarge the boundaries of the church. His riches were liberally dispensed in the patronage of learning; and he cultivated that rare virtue in a prince, patience to be instructed by the good and enlightened men whom God had raised up to be the ornament of his age.

The father of this great man had required, we have seen, the aid of the Roman pontiff to give the colour of legitimization and sanctity to his usurpation of the title of king. Childeric III., a weak and wretched monarch,

had long ceased to possess the substance of royalty, when he was thus compelled to yield its remaining shadow to his mayor of the palace. Pepin in return for the benefit conferred upon him by the pope, not only set him free from the attacks of the Lombards, but granted him the sovereignty of the exarchate. This grant was renewed by Charlemagne, and with several important additions ; so that from this time the Roman pontiffs really possessed a sovereign power over those lands, the original grant of which to their see they had long ascribed to the doubtful liberality of Constantine the Great.

But while the benefits thus mutually bestowed, tended to establish an indissoluble union between the pope and the emperor, it is equally certain, that Charlemagne never entertained a feeling prejudicial either to his own independence, or to that of the church. A proof of this has been already given in the account of his conduct in reference to image-worship. Favourable as successive pontiffs were to its establishment, Charlemagne contended against it with all the keenness and resolution of a polemic. Instead of submitting to the dictations of Rome, he asserted the freedom of his own mind and conscience, and the rights of the Gallican church, in a manner which would have done credit to a prince living at an advanced period of religious enlightenment.

This, however, was far from being the only, or the most striking instance of the wise endeavours of Charlemagne to further the interests of religion. He beheld, with sorrow, the growing immorality of the clergy, and the dissolute state of many of the monastic establishments. In order to correct these evils, he published from time to time, a series of laws, which, arranged in several divisions, are known under the general title of *Capitularies*. An

abstract of the contents of these will throw no little light upon the state of religion at the time when they were drawn up. It is evident, from many of the articles which they contain, that everything which concerned religion, had become connected with some novel rite, or custom, injurious to its simplicity. Thus, the first of the Capitularies, among other directions to the clergy, contained particular rules for the administration of the sacraments to the sick and to penitents. "Let no one die," it was said, "without extreme unction ; reconciliation, and the viaticum." Mass was only to be said in churches dedicated to our Lord, and upon stone altars, consecrated by the bishop.

In another of the capitularies the most minute instructions are given as to the manner of conducting public prayer. Thus every bishop was to sing three masses and three psalters ; the first for the king, the second for the army, and the third against existing calamities. Presbyters were also to say three masses ; and monks, nuns, and canons three psalters. The duty of charity was happily supported by the imperial constitutions with at least as much care as that of attendance to the ritual. Hence it was commanded that bishops, abbots, and abbesses who had wealth, should pay at the rate of a pound of silver towards the maintenance of the poor ; that those who were less wealthy should, instead of giving the pound of silver, maintain such a number of poor as their means would allow. The chief of the nobles were subjected to a similar obligation ; and thus the important principle was established, that the richer members of the church should, according to their ability, provide for the necessities of their poor brethren.

In a capitulary published at Aix-la-Chapelle in the year 789, the emperor exhorted the clergy to watch over

their flocks, as those who must give account. Having quoted a large body of ancient canons and decrees, he next sets forth twenty-two new constitutions, which, if rendered necessary by the particular character of the times, give us a melancholy picture of the then state of society. These laws are directed against perjuries, witchcrafts, murders ; and the earnest exhortations with which they are accompanied, persuading to peace, resignation, submission to lawful authority, reverence in churches, order in the divine service, and similar duties, show the anxiety of Charlemagne to lay the foundation of his rule in the moral virtues of his people.

By another set of laws, published at the beginning of the ninth century, it was ordered, that tithes should be paid ; and that of the income thus collected, one part should be given for the proper adornment of the church, another for the use of the poor, and the third for the maintenance of the clergy. Injunctions are again and again repeated, compelling the different degrees of ecclesiastics to lead a more regular life than that which they seem to have been hitherto pursuing. Had they not habitually indulged themselves in the loosest kind of conduct, and pretended to a superiority to the rest of mankind, there would have been little need of laws so stringent as many of those which enter into the later capitularies.

The practical good sense which prompted Charlemagne's counsels was strikingly in contrast with the superstitious spirit of his age. It had become generally understood in the Roman church, and in the churches in communion with it, that Latin only was the language in which religious services could be acceptably performed. But the precept which Charlemagne established was, that God may be adored, and the prayers which men offer up to Him,

heard, in every language which exists, if he who prays seeks that which is just and holy.

A similar feeling is shown in the laws which he passed against the practices which tended to injure the sanctity of Scripture. The monks, and many of the clergy, had been long accustomed to abuse the credulity of the people by a peculiar species of divination. Thus it was generally believed, that if some portion of the sacred volume were laid upon the tomb of a saint, the ceremony being accompanied by prayer and fasting, the page at which it opened when taken up, would convey a true message from heaven. This superstition had advanced to such a height, even in the sixth century, that two provincial synods found it necessary to enact the severest laws against its continuance. But notwithstanding these efforts to suppress it, it was practised to a great extent in the time of Charlemagne ; and the measures which he employed to overcome so prejudicial a superstition afford another instance of his clear insight into the state of religion. The same observation may be applied to the opinions which he frequently expressed on the prevailing passion for sumptuous churches. "It is well," he said, "to have beautiful churches ; but the ornament and sublimity of holy manners is a thing far more to be desired ; for it seems to us that the erection of splendid edifices has a certain relation to the ancient law, while the correction of our conduct pertains immediately to the New Testament and to Christian discipline." The admirable qualities of Charlemagne's own mind were the source of improvements which, had they been followed up by his successors, would have greatly retarded the decline of learning and religion. But he had the wisdom not to depend upon his own unaided abilities. His desire to promote the grand interests of religion and civilization

prompted him to seek the co-operation of the most pious and learned men of the age. Among these, Alcuin afforded a noble example of those virtues which are most likely to prove useful in the adviser of a king. His history may be briefly told. He was born in York, or in the vicinity of that city, and his parents being persons of wealth and rank, he obtained all the advantages of an education in the monastery attached to the cathedral. Devoting himself with extreme ardour to the pursuits of learning, he was appointed superintendent both of the school and library belonging to the monastery. His fame speedily extended to other countries; and Charlemagne invited him to take up his abode at his court. There, Alcuin's attainments and virtues acquired the respect which they merited. Charlemagne bestowed upon him several rich abbeys, and it was to him that he referred when important questions of doctrine or discipline demanded his decision. The counsels which Alcuin gave were dictated by a pure and conscientious spirit. Unmoved by ambition or the love of wealth, he rejected rather than sought the rewards which the emperor heaped upon him. Thus he complained to his friends of the cares which the possession of his rich abbeys brought with it, and he employed as much earnestness in praying Charlemagne to free him from the burden of so large a revenue, as others used in seeking preferment. Though devoutly attentive to the ordinances of religion, and daily partaking in its most solemn mysteries, he never advanced beyond the order of deacon. He was, therefore, at liberty to pursue his favourite studies, and to devote himself to the execution of those beneficent plans suggested by his imperial patron for the advancement of learning. With little pretension to originality, he carefully surveyed the round of the sci-

ences as known in his times, and then exploring the remains of antiquity, gave a fresh impulse to inquiry, by showing how many suggestions might be derived from the past for the confirmation of principles important to all periods.

Alcuin's own writings embrace treatises on grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, and mathematics. The last-mentioned branch of general knowledge was again divided into four parts, namely, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. These with grammar, rhetoric, and logic formed what were then termed the seven liberal arts; and a thorough acquaintance with the rules on which they were founded was the common aim of scholars in the middle ages. Alcuin, if we were to form our judgment from what is known of his writings only, would appear to have been a mere scholar of ordinary capacity, improved by thought and industry. But it is not in this manner we can properly estimate the character or ability of such men. The common endowments displayed in a learned compilation are not those which inspire reverence, and give the power or influence by which princes are led to good or evil. Alcuin's place in the council-chamber of Charlemagne was assigned him, because that great man knew the value of wisdom and genius. It is one of the most interesting facts in the history of this period, that so much respect was shown for intellectual acquirements; but we may readily believe that it was in this case, as in many others, not the author but the counsellor for whom honours were prepared; and that the genius of Alcuin was proved with incomparably greater effect when he uttered his grave, sententious speeches, than when he wrote his treatises on theology, or on the seven liberal arts.

But whatever were Alcuin's acquirements, or the gene-

ral powers of his mind, he was indebted, in a large degree, for their rightful direction to the instructions of the venerable Bede. It was under his guidance that he first learnt to estimate the value of Holy Scripture ; and that he acquired the habit of trying all principles and rules of action by 'the test of a pure conscience. Thus the venerable Bede, though passing his whole life in the retirement of an English monastery, was instrumental to the advancement of religion in all the most important countries of Europe. Alcuin carried to the court of Charlemagne the invaluable lessons which he had received from his master, and it is more than probable that the general doctrine of the French church was materially affected by the impressions thus derived from the great English theologian. Such was the reputation enjoyed by Bede, that William of Malmsbury, speaking of his industry and talents, says of him, that he could never have written so many, and such large volumes, in the narrow limits of a single life, had not God granted him an extraordinary portion of his divine spirit.* Another expression commonly applied to him was, that, having been born in the remotest corner of the world, he embraced the whole world in the compass of his genius.

The writings of Bede exhibit many proofs that he was not, in every respect, superior to the common errors of his age. But his spirit was simple and elevated. Those who had partaken of his instructions could not fail to venerate Scripture as the only safe guide to truth. The very last hour of his life was occupied in the exposition of St. John's Gospel ; and the whole tendency of his teaching was spiritual and evangelical. In his commentary on the

* De Gestis. Ang. lib. iii. c. 3.

words of our Lord, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me, ye can do nothing,"* he says, "We here see, my dear brethren, a great proof of the necessity of that grace, which gives light to the hearts of the humble, but closes the mouths of the proud. Whatsoever may enter into your imagination, whether the design be great or small, you cannot accomplish it without the succour of Him, unaided by whose grace you can bring nothing to pass. This truth is clearly shown in the comparison employed by our Lord. For although the branch of the vine will bear fruit, if the husbandman tends it, yet if it remain not in the vine, or partake not of its sap, it will bear no fruit, however anxiously it may be looked for." So also, speaking of charity, he says, "It is a gift of God ; for to believe, to love, to do the good which we know, we must receive the ability as a free gift from God, and without precedent merit on our part. The law which was given by Moses, indicates clearly enough what we ought to do, and what we ought to avoid ; but it is only by the grace of Jesus Christ that we can fulfil the commandments. The law shows with sufficient plainness what we must do to be just ; but it is the grace of Jesus Christ, poured by the spirit of charity into the hearts of the faithful, which gives us ability to accomplish what the law demands. When any one does that which is commanded by the law, it is Jesus, who, by his grace, disposes him to do it. Grace and truth are by Jesus Christ ; for by bestowing upon us the gift of his Holy Spirit, He has given us the power to understand spiritual things, and to obey the law."

It is refreshing to meet with sentiments like these, at a

* John xv. 6.

period when the gathering clouds of superstition threatened to involve the whole of Christendom in darkness. The Western church continued to enjoy a large share of scriptural instruction till beyond the middle of the ninth century. Even in controversies on matters which were most likely to give importance to logical ingenuity, or to the authority of tradition, an appeal to the Bible continued to be made ; and the greatest men of the age employed their time in the study and explanation of its pages.

But a brief account of the controversies which arose at this period, will serve to show the tendencies of the age, and the general state of learning and opinion.

The writings of Augustine had long formed the great storehouse both of ideas and arguments for the Western theologians. But profound as was the veneration in which his name was held, no slight difference of opinion prevailed as to the nature of some of his doctrines. His views on the subject of predestination were regarded by many as constituting a firm foundation for the purest system of evangelical theology. Others, on the contrary, considered that they ought to be received with great caution, and many modifications. Thus the seeds of a controversy were sown, which threatened, at one time, to overrun the church with numberless disorders.

Rabanus Maurus had studied under Alcuin, and was one of those distinguished men, who had profited most by his instructions. After making a pilgrimage to Palestine, he returned to Germany, and was appointed abbot of the monastery of Fulda, rendered venerable as the abode both of Boniface and Alcuin. Deeply impressed with the necessity of promoting the cause of learning, he established an extensive school at Fulda ; and to his zeal and erudition many of the most eminent theologians of the age

were indebted for their acquirements. Rabanus continued during twenty years to labour in his office of abbot, and head of this important seminary. He then retired into solitude, and devoted himself entirely to the private exercises of religion, and the composition of works on theology. But he was not long allowed to indulge in the delights of such a tranquil and studious life. In the year 847, he was appointed archbishop of Maynz, and in this elevated position, took an active share in all the great transactions of the church.

It was just at the period when Rabanus was made archbishop of Maynz, that Gottschalk, a Saxon, began to render himself conspicuous by his writings and discourses on the doctrine of Predestination. He had been educated in the seminary of Fulda, and was bound, by the vows of his parents, to the monastic life. But though readily devoting himself to study, he shrunk from the obligations imposed upon him as a monk ; and making his solemn appeal to a synod, he obtained a dispensation which freed him from the bonds so hateful to his feelings. Against this decision of the synod Rabanus Maurus, then abbot of Fulda, made a counter appeal, and addressed himself to the emperor, Louis the Debonaire. His influence sufficed to obtain a reversal of the decree in favour of Gottschalk ; but the latter, indignant at the violence done to his conscience, though obliged to submit, resolved not to pass his life under the government of Rabanus. He, therefore, removed from Fulda, and entered the monastery of Orbais, in the diocese of Soissons. Here he devoted himself with increased ardour to the study of theology, and found a delight in plunging into the most dangerous depths of speculation. Servatus Lupus, a good and learned man, abbot of Ferrières, earnestly warned him against such a

course of inquiry, directing him rather to contemplate, with a humble and thankful mind, the treasures of knowledge so plainly contained in Scripture.*

But Gottschalk had proceeded too far in the seductive paths of speculation to give heed to the warnings of his pious adviser. The subject of predestination presented itself to his mind as that which offered the richest rewards to a sanctified inquiry. To this, therefore, he applied all the energies of his mind ; and the result of his speculation was that system of doctrine which produced such important effects in the theological schools, not only of his own, but future times. According to the most careful abstracts given of his doctrine, he contended for a two fold predestination, according to which God has elected one part of mankind to eternal life, and another to eternal damnation. During a journey which he made in Germany and Italy, he had a conference with Notingus, bishop of Verona ; and in the course of their debate, he unfolded his views with such startling, and terrible distinctness, that the prelate felt inspired with the most earnest wish to make them known to some one more able than himself to oppose their publication. His desire was soon accomplished. Meeting with Rabanus, he described the nature of the conference which he had lately had with Gottschalk. The archbishop promised to give his attention to the subject ; and he soon after issued his work in confutation of the suspected doctrine. In this treatise,

*“ In amplissimo Scripturarum campo interim spatiumur, earumque meditationem nos penitus totosque dedamus, faciemque Domini humiliter, pie ac semper quæramus. Ejus erit clementiæ, ut dum considerata nostra conditione, altiora nobis non quæramus nec fortiora scrutamur, nos ad sublimiora et robustiora sustollere purgatisque nostræ mentis obtutibus, quibus videri posse revelavit, semet ipsum dignetur ostendere.” — Ep. xxx.

he directed his main arguments against the statement, that no man predestined to life can be lost, and that no one predestined to damnation can be saved. He argues accordingly, "that such a kind of predestination is contrary to the goodness and justice of God, who desires the salvation of all men, and who certainly would not condemn a man for the sin which he could not avoid. He acknowledges that the doctrine of predestination is asserted in Scripture, but in this sense: namely, that all men having been brought by the sin of their first parents into a state of condemnation, none can be delivered except by the grace of Jesus Christ, who was provided and predestinated as their Saviour from all eternity. He adds, that those who are freed from the state of damnation, and whose sins, both original and actual, have been pardoned, through baptism, may afterwards be condemned for the sins which they freely and wilfully commit; that it is by the foresight of their evil will that they are predestined to condemnation, but that neither in this case, nor in that of a predestination to glory, does the predestination in itself necessitate the object of it to pursue a particular course." And further: "God predestines things, only because He foresees in what mannér they will happen: He does not predestine evil, but foresees it only, whereas He both foresees and predestines good. Out of the whole mass of mankind, He saves, by a mere act of grace, those whom it pleases Him to choose, while He leaves the rest to suffer the condemnation which they merit for their sins."

Gottschalk, however, was far from admitting that Rabanus had given a fair statement of his doctrine. He, therefore, published an answer to his treatise; but instead of denying that he taught the doctrine of reprobation,

tion, he severely censured Rabanus for asserting that the reprobate are not predestined to damnation. God, he says, foreseeing that they would live and die in sin, ordained them to eternal torments. In reference to the apostolic sentence, "God will have all men to be saved," he remarks, that this is to be understood of those only who are actually and effectually saved, because there are none that God will have to be saved, but shall be saved; and, moreover, that Jesus Christ did not shed his blood to redeem those who are finally and eternally reprobated, but only for the elect.

So confident was Gottschalk, not only of the truth of his doctrines, but also of the force of the arguments which he could employ to support them, that in the year 848 he made a journey to Maynz, and there courted an inquiry into his system before the archbishop himself. A synod was accordingly assembled; and Gottschalk in a solemn confession of his faith declared, that he believed in a two-fold predestination, that is, of the elect to eternal happiness, and of the reprobate to damnation, because that, as God has immutably predestined the elect, through his free mercy, and before the creation of the world, to life eternal, so has He immutably predestined the reprobate, for their wicked actions, to eternal death.

It is suspected that the synod was too much under the influence of Rabanus, as archbishop of the see, to form a fair judgment on the controversy. This suspicion is scarcely consistent with what is otherwise said of the high character of Rabanus, as a man of learning and piety. But, to the great injury of truth, as far as its interests are connected with the rights of conscience, Gottschalk was exposed to a violent and degrading treatment, and Rabanus himself condescended to employ expressions

in speaking of his opponent which betray far too much of passion to give us a favourable idea of his conduct in the dispute. Nor was he satisfied with heaping reproaches on his rival polemic. He put forth the whole force of his authority and influence to crush him. Thus he addressed himself to archbishop Hincmar, in whose province Gottschalk's monastery was situated, and consigning the unfortunate monk to his charge, left nothing unsaid which might tend to prejudice his cause. The style of his epistle will afford a good illustration of the spirit and temper which animated the bishops of that age. "Ye know," he says, "that a certain vagrant monk, named Gottschalk, who states that he was ordained priest in your diocese, being come from Italy to Maynz, is found to teach a wicked and pernicious doctrine concerning predestination. He maintains, that as there is a predestination of God for the good, so there is also for the evil ; and that there are many persons in the world, who can neither forsake their errors, nor escape from the power of sin, because of the predestination of God, by which they are consigned to death, being also in their own nature incorrigible and worthy of damnation. Having, been found guilty of maintaining this doctrine, and being condemned, as refusing to retract his error, by the synod lately held at Maynz, we have thought fit, according to the order and advice of our most pious King Louis, to send him to you, that you may keep him within your diocese, from which he has travelled, contrary to the canons. Do not suffer him any longer to teach his error, or to seduce the people ; for he has already perverted many, and rendered them careless of the work of salvation, by suggesting to them such questions as these, ' Why should we labour for salvation ? If we be predestined to damnation we cannot

avoid it ; and if, on the contrary, we be predestined to salvation, whatever be our sins, we shall certainly be saved.'” “Thus have I briefly explained,” concludes Rabanus, “what the doctrine of Gottschalk is. You, may, however, learn more of it from his own mouth ; and then takè what measures against him you see fit.”

The archbishop of Rheims was too ready to seize every opportunity of displaying his zeal in the cause of ecclesiastical authority, not to attend at once to the representations of his brother metropolitan. Summoning Gottschalk before a synod at Chiersy, he opposed to the poor, undefended monk, the most powerful bishops of France. The object of the synod appears to have been simply to compel an ardent, conscientious man, to make a more public profession of his faith, and then to condemn him as a heretic. From the bold, unswerving tone in which Gottschalk always spoke, he was evidently impressed with the profoundest conviction that what he taught was the truth. It is rarely that so much courage and consistency, such an earnest devotion to the unfolding of some high class of spiritual mysteries, are unattended with virtues which deserve respect. But whatever the good qualities of Gottschalk, whatever his learning and piety, they were worthless in the eyes of those who had predetermined, that there could be no excellence in any one who would not sacrifice his opinions at their bidding. The sentence passed upon him was thus expressed : “Brother Gottschalk : know that thou art deprived of the sacred office of priesthood, which, if thou hast indeed ever received it, thou hast profaned by thy manners, disorderly actions, and corrupt doctrines. By the judgment, therefore, of the Holy Spirit, of whose grace the priesthood is a special gift, and by virtue of the body and blood of Jesus

Christ, thou art utterly forbidden to officiate in it any more. Seeing, moreover, that thou has intermeddled with ecclesiastical and civil affairs, contrary to the profession and duty of a monk, and in contempt of the law of the church, we do, by virtue of our episcopal authority, order and command, that, according to the rules of the church, thou be severely scourged, and afterwards confined in close prison ; and, that thou mayst never infect others again by thy teaching, we enjoin thee perpetual silence, in the name of the Eternal Word."

This infamous sentence, dictated alike by tyranny and ignorance, was executed with all the barbarity which its authors could desire. The unfortunate monk was scourged in the presence of the emperor and the bishops. He held in his hand the book in which he had written a collection of passages from the Scriptures, and the fathers, in proof of his doctrine. The scourging was continued till he cast this volume into the fire. He was then removed, and immediately committed a close prisoner to the monastery of Hautevilliers.

Gottschalk, in answer to the treatises which were written against him, and in which he was liberally charged with heresy, and almost every other crime, composed two other statements of his faith, and strove to set forth in clearer light than before, the main points of his system. Having asserted, as at first, the predestination of the elect to life eternal, and the predestination of devils and the reprobate to eternal death, he adds, that this doctrine is immediately founded upon Scripture, and the plain statements of the ancient fathers, especially those of Saint Augustine, Gregory, Fulgentius, and Isidore. In answer to the accusation of heresy, he defies his enemies to prove him guilty of such an offence ; for, according to Cassio-

dorus, he says, a heretic is one who, either out of ignorance, or contempt of the law of God, defends a new error, or follows an old one. He did neither the one nor the other, he contends ; for that which he taught was in perfect harmony with the Scriptures and the fathers.

Notwithstanding the haughty spirit with which the two synods had condemned Gottschalk's doctrine, the subject of predestination soon began to be considered as fairly open to discussion. Bishops and abbots engaged in the controversy ; and instead of its appearing that the questions which it involved might be settled by the sentence of some few men in power, it was seen, that the longer they were discussed,—the more carefully they were examined,—so much the more difficult it became to satisfy inquiring minds on the points at issue.

One of the most able of the writers whom controversy called forth was Lupus Servatus. Such was the value attached to the opinion of this learned abbot, that though both Rabanus and Hincmar had written largely on the subject, his opinion was deemed of more importance than all which had hitherto been said to the settlement of the dispute. In the treatise which he published at the request of Charles the Bald, he shows, how both angels and men, being subject to change, God alone having the character of immutability, might fall into sin. But man having broken the divine law, though retaining some degree of freedom, cannot choose that which is good, except by the help of Jesus Christ. So far as he is free, his inclinations ever tend to evil, and he may by indulging them involve himself in eternal ruin. But though he has a liberty which leaves him the power of voluntarily taking the road of destruction, he cannot save himself, or resist the dominion of sin, without divine grace.

Hence, those who are eternally condemned, are so punished by God's righteous judgment ; while they that are saved, are only delivered by his gracious mercy. " Why God shows mercy to some, and not to others," it is not for us, says Servatus, " to inquire. He could doubtless save all. But it is his good pleasure, while He saves some, to leave others in the mass of perdition. When Scripture says, that He will have all men to be saved, it ought to be understood as referring to those only who are effectually called and sanctified." The word *all*, he contends, may be taken with exceptions ; or, it may be interpreted as referring to all classes of mankind. Predestination is wholly gratuitous ; and it is in consequence of this free election, that God gives grace to some, who are thereby capable of good, while He leaves others to the power of their own corruption. But He cannot, on this account, be regarded as the author of evil. He foresees, indeed, both the good and evil ; but while He predestines the former, He only permits the latter.

Servatus evidently feared to enter into the subject of reprobation, and acknowledges that he had not met with such an expression as predestination to damnation, in Scripture. The fathers of the church, he adds, shrunk from employing such terms, lest men might be led into the notion that God had made his creatures only to punish them. With regard to the extent of the redemption effected by Christ, and which he speaks of as the measure of his blood, he argues, that the expressions which import that He died for all men, ought to be taken in the same sense as that in which it is said that God " will have all men to be saved." So also, he remarks, that it may be affirmed as a probability that he died for all that are in His church, and receive the sacraments,

whether they be in the number of the reprobate or the elect. Some, he adds, condemn the opinion thus stated as blasphemous; but the apostle, speaking of the merits of Christ, and saying that they are of no avail to those who are circumcised, it seems reasonable to believe that the death of Jesus Christ is of no worth to those who are baptized, but relapse and die in their sins and infidelity. To defend himself, however, against the violent attacks of those who contend that Christ died not only for the good but for sinners also, he quotes the words of St. Chrysostom, who says, "that Christ died for all by virtue of his doctrine and holiness."

Whether from some remaining doubt on his mind, as to what might be the inferences drawn from his argument, or from a real feeling of moderation and charity, Lupus Servatus was so far from imitating the violence of his brother polemics, that he actually concluded his treatise with the remark, that every one should be allowed to adopt those views on the intricate subject of predestination which he believed to be the most correct and Scriptural.

Thinking, perhaps, that the elaborate account which he had given of his doctrine might not obtain the attention which it deserved, he drew up an analysis of his principal arguments, and sent the paper to Hincmar. In this abridgment of his main work, he states that, according to the most correct exposition of the doctrine, predestination, in regard to the elect, is a preparative grace, and in respect to the wicked, a withdrawing of that grace. He then adds, that all men are born in a state of condemnation, and that God delivers from that state such as He is pleased to deliver, but leaves the rest to suffer according to his justice; whence it follows that God predestines

those whom he hardens, not by impelling them to sin, but by not keeping them from it ; that predestination does not necessitate either the good or evil to a particular kind of conduct, both having a certain freedom of will, which is inconsistent with a fatal necessity ; that the elect, who receive from God the power to will and to do, perform freely whatever pertains to salvation, while the reprobate, who are forsaken by God, do voluntarily, and not against their will, those actions which deserve eternal punishment.

Whatever effort Servatus made either to set his opinions in the clearest light, or to render them acceptable to the parties which he wished to conciliate, he seems to have effected little good. By some he was accused of a vain endeavour to modify doctrines of the most important character for the sake of winning applause ; by others it was said, that he fostered notions which were injurious to the glory of God's mercy and goodness. Against these charges he wrote with great force and earnestness. But his caution rendered him hateful in the eyes of those who desired to see every doubt and question sacrificed to their own violent feelings. When he reasoned and appealed to the Scriptures and the fathers, and pleaded for moderation in the mode of drawing inferences from doctrines in themselves too profound for man to fathom, he was accused of temporising ; and the really valuable expositions of many important points to be found in his writings, were contemptuously rejected because some were supposed to favour Gottschalk, and others Rabanus

Another writer of high reputation and attainments was called forth to take part in this controversy. Ratramnus, the celebrated monk of Corbi, having been appealed to by the emperor himself, wrote a treatise, in two books, on

the subject of predestination. In the first book he shows, by numerous quotations from the Scriptures and the fathers, that whatever takes place in the world is accomplished by God's command, and the direction of his providence. He further argues, that although the Deity is certainly, not the cause of the crimes and sins perpetrated by wicked men, yet they are subject to the order of providence, and serve for the execution of his will ; that God has foreseen from all eternity what shall happen both to the good and the evil, to the elect and the reprobate ; that the predestination of the saints is the effect of his mercy, and that the number of the elect can neither be increased nor diminished, nor in any otherwise altered ; that all the holy thoughts and good works of the saints, by which they accomplish their salvation, are simply the effect of God's grace ; that our free-will is too weak to effect any good unless it be strengthened by the grace of heaven, and that this grace operates in us to will and to do, and is necessary for the beginning of faith and prayer.

In the second part of his treatise, Rattramnus discusses the subject of predestination, as it regards sinners ; speaking only incidentally of the predestination of the elect. The arguments adduced are mainly directed to establish the views to be found in the writings of St. Augustine and his followers. According to his exposition of these fathers, Rattramnus argues, that God has not predestined sinners to sin, but to the punishment of their sins ; and, consequently, to eternal torments. Rejecting the distinctions which some writers had endeavoured to establish, namely, that eternal punishment was ordained and appointed for sinners, but that they were not predestined to endure it, he reasons, that this predestination did not

impose upon them the necessity of sinning ; and yet that those who are elected by the free mercy of God, shall infallibly be saved, while the rest shall be as infallibly condemned for the sins which, left as they are in the mass of perdition, they voluntarily commit. The general inference which he draws from the whole, is worthy of an enlightened and pious mind. Let all the good which we do be attributed to God ; and let all the evil which we perpetrate be ascribed to ourselves. God never inclines us to evil. He only leaves us to the working of our corrupt will.

Copies of the work of Ratramnus were immediately forwarded, by order of the emperor, to the most distinguished theologians of the day. Among others, Johannes Erigena Scotus was invited to examine the views which it contained, and that celebrated dialectician readily embraced so favourable an opportunity for the display of his subtle genius. In the work which he wrote on the subject, he distinctly opposes the idea of a twofold predestination, and proves that predestination does not involve the idea of a necessitating control. He argues that man remained absolutely free after the fall ; and that, though he can do no good without the grace of Jesus Christ, he does it, if at all, without being constrained to it. Sin, and the consequences of sin, with the punishments by which it is attended, are, according to Scotus, mere privations, and are, therefore, neither foreseen, nor predestined, by God. Predestination has reference to those things only which concern eternal happiness, and this predestination is itself connected with God's foresight of the good use we may make of our free-will. The argument upon which he rests his assertion, that even eternal punishments are mere privations,

is this :—The torments of the damned are but the negation of happiness—the agony arising from the sense of its loss. Pursuing his speculations into the most awful regions of divine mysteries, he argues, that the bodies of the damned will be subjected to no other fire than that through which the bodies of all men, both good and bad, will finally have to pass ; but that the bodies of the elect, assuming an ethereal nature, will suffer no harm from the action of the fire ; while those of the wicked, on the contrary, being changed into air, will suffer torment from the fire, because of their contrary qualities. Hence it was, he says, that the demons, who had originally bodies of an ethereal nature, were afterwards enveloped in a mass of air, that they might be rendered susceptible to the action of penal fires.

The bold and abstruse reasonings of Scotus were so far from tending to tranquillize the angry feelings to which the controversy respecting predestination had given birth, that they introduced a new element of discord. He was accused of Pelagianism, and other heresies, and Prudentius, bishop of Troyes, undertook the formal refutation of his work.

Prudentius cautiously commenced his treatise by rejecting the system of scholastic logic as applicable to the purposes for which Scotus had employed it. He then proceeded to show, that predestination ought to be distinguished from prescience, and that prescience, but not predestination, extends to sin. Predestination is described as twofold. By the one, God has freely predestined the elect to grace and glory ; by the other, He has predestined the wicked, whose sins He foresees, to eternal damnation. Man, according to this writer, did not retain, after the fall, the free power of doing good, and cannot do

it in any wise without the grace of Jesus Christ, that divine influence, however, being sufficient to excite and impel him to its performance. No one will venture to affirm, he says, that grace wholly destroys free will, or that predestination imposes any necessity upon men. Free-will, he adds, is nothing more than a voluntary choice, an unconstrained acting of the mind. In the concluding section of his work, Prudentius speaks in strong and severe terms of the reasoning of Scotus, in which he endeavours to establish his own particular theory respecting the punishment of the reprobate, and opposes to these notions of the subtle dialectician, the doctrine of the church, and of the fathers, who contend that damnation is followed not by mere privation of happiness, but by the tortures of fire.

The controversy was carried on with increasing earnestness from year to year. Learning and ability, in all their various grades, were engaged in the endeavour to explain and define doctrines which, if intelligible at all, can only be so to the purest spiritual consciousness. In no instance of religious mystery is the language of the apostle more applicable than in this: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things: yea, the deep things of God."* It would appear, indeed, almost from the very nature of the subject, that the power to apprehend it aright must depend in great measure, on the spiritual state of the inquirer. If the most accomplished intellect cannot by searching find out God, neither can it

* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

apprehend the nature of his decrees, or the operation of his judgments.

One of the greatest difficulties with which the opponents of Gottschalk had to contend, arose from the circumstance, that Augustine's doctrine differed but little from that of the monk. This was felt, and partly acknowledged. Remigius, archbishop of Lyons, openly declared his consent to Augustine's opinions on predestination and grace ; but he at the same time, accused Gottschalk of rashness and extravagance. An abstract of his argument will afford another useful illustration of the difficulty encountered by the best and most enlightened men in discussing this abstruse subject. Having proved by passages from the fathers, and other testimonies, that the pre-science and predestination of God are infallible, he concludes, "that none of those whom God hath predestined, through his free mercy, and to his own glory, shall perish, and that none of those whom He hath predestined to eternal death shall be saved ; not that they are unavoidably sentenced to damnation by the mere power of God, but by his just judgment, he having foreseen their sin ; and because they deserve it through the invincible and unchangeable malignity of their will."

In respect to that which was said of the will of God to save all men, he quotes the opinions of the ancient writers, and shows that the word *all* may be taken in different senses, rendering, in fact, the passage alluded to as doubtful in meaning, as his own reasoning is subtle and obscure. In regard to Christ's dying for all men, he quotes several texts to show, that the Redeemer shed his blood for the world at large, and then proceeds to state, that, in the order of reconciliation, the first delivered are the elect, of whom none can perish. The second, are the

faithful, who have properly received baptism, and whose sins, by grace, are pardoned, but who do not persevere. The third, are such as still live in unbelief, but who will be called through the mercy of God ; and the fourth, are those who will continue unbelievers to the end, and shall never be made partakers of heavenly grace. Appealing to the authority of the fathers, he contends, that Jesus Christ died for the first three of these four classes ; not indeed for the wicked, who died before his coming, without the knowledge of true religion ; but for disbelievers who have lived since his advent, or shall hereafter be born. He confesses, however, that some of the fathers assert that Christ died even for those who were never baptized, or converted. This statement, he says, though neither exact nor true, may be tolerated for the sake of peace, it being wrong in men to condemn each other on questions of this nature, the difficulty of the subject excusing in some degree ignorance and doubt.

In agreement with the sentiment thus expressed, Remigius censured the proceedings against Gottschalk as unnecessarily severe. He even contended that the arguments employed to confute him were imbued with error. The great names of Hincmar and Rabanus did not prevent him from attributing to their writings a dangerous tendency, as to some points connected with the doctrines of grace and predestination ; and while he acknowledged that Gottschalk merited some sort of punishment for his talkative and bold impudence, he condemned the conduct of those who, to chastise the presumptuous monk, had brought the truth itself into dispute.

Hincmar, as might be expected, was little pleased with his ingenuous mode of treating the question between him and Gottschalk. Having assembled, therefore, a synod

at Quiercy, he proposed four statements of doctrine to the meeting. These were : " 1. That there is no predestination, but predestination to life, by which God has chosen out of the mass of perdition, into which all men fell by the sin of Adam, those whom He has predestined by his grace to glory. With regard to those whom he has left in the state of damnation, he foresaw that they would perish, but he has not predestined them to destruction. He has only predestined the eternal punishment, which they have deserved. 2. That the free-will which we have lost by the sin of the first man, is restored by Jesus Christ, and we have a full power to do good, by the assistance of his grace, and to do evil, being forsaken by it. 3. That God would have all men, without exception, to be saved, although they be not all saved ; that those that are saved are so by the grace of Christ ; and that those that perish, are damned for their own sins. 4. That Jesus Christ has suffered for all men, although all men are not redeemed by the mystery of his passion ; this being the case, not because the price paid for their redemption is insufficient, but because they have not a saving, or justifying, faith."

To these articles of the Synod of Quiercy, Remigius returned an answer full of severe reflections on the sophistry, and unscriptural errors, on which he supposed them to be based. The principal points to which he objected were : 1. That man before the fall was free to do good, no mention being made of divine assistance, without which neither men nor angels can do good. 2. That the predestination of the elect depended upon the foreknowledge of their good works. 3. That God had not predestined the wicked to damnation.

These errors were involved, according to Remigius, in

the first part of the four articles adopted by the synod. In regard to the second, he objected: 1. That its authors had spoken too briefly respecting free-will, having, in fact, contented themselves with some few and insufficient explanations of the fathers on this subject: 2. That they had asserted the utter loss of our free-will by the fall; whereas the fathers confess, that though it be weakened by the sin of Adam, and cannot be properly exercised without the aid of divine grace, it is not altogether destroyed. All men, he argues, have naturally judgment, reason, intelligence, by which they are all to distinguish that which is good from that which is evil, and that which is just from that which is unjust. They have even, in some degree, the power both to choose that which is good, and to do that which is right. This power, however, is confined to temporal things. In all which regards salvation we are helpless without the aid of divine grace.

The synod in which Hincmar had propounded and obtained the ratification of his doctrines, consisted of bishops and abbots. Remigius resolved that his own opinions should be supported by a no less dignified assembly. He accordingly summoned several prelates of the provinces Lyons, Arles, and Vienne. Fourteen bishops met at Valence, and the three metropolitans gave authority to the synod, as well by the earnestness with which they entered into its proceedings, as by their character and rank. Six canons were the result of their discussions. Grace, free-will, and predestination, are the subjects embraced in these new articles of faith. In the first of the canons, it is forbidden to use any novel expressions on the doctrines referred to; and the members of the church are commanded to follow the opinions of the Latin

fathers. The second canon declares that God hath foreseen, from all eternity, all the good which righteous men will do, by the aid of his grace ; and all the evil which sinners will commit by their own wickedness : that the righteous will receive eternal life, as the reward of their good actions ; while the wicked will be justly condemned for their crimes, to eternal punishment : that this pre-science on the part of God lays no necessity upon any man, none being condemned but for their original or actual sins. In the third canon, predestination is again spoken of, but it is shown, that while in the election of those that are saved God's mercy goes before their works, so, in the damnation of those that perish, their crimes precede the just judgment of God. The fourth canon speaks of the death of Christ, who, it is simply said, died for all those who sincerely believe in him. In the fifth, it is asserted, that all those who are baptized and regenerate, have part in the redemption of Jesus Christ, and this, though they may subsequently lose the innocency bestowed by baptism, and fall into the number of the reprobate. The last canon merely declares the belief of the synod in those doctrines respecting the grace of Christ, its regenerating and saving efficacy, which had been established by the consent of the fathers, and the councils of Africa and Orange.

These proceedings were no sooner made known to Hincmar, than he accused the members of the synod of unfair conduct, both in regard to himself, and in reference to the controversy. The bishops there present, he said, had unwisely begun the dispute, and he again appealed to the great body of the fathers of the church to prove the correctness of his views, and the untenable nature of those of his opponents. In a treatise which he subse-

quently drew up, he again entered into a minute discussion of the questions agitated. The greater part of his arguments referred to subjects which had long been viewed in all the various forms in which it seemed possible to discuss them. But in the twelfth section of his work, he spoke of predestination generally; and, reasoning professedly according to the principles of Augustine, he argues, that God has predestined the works, as well as the glory of the elect; that he foresaw the sins of the reprobate, and knowing them, not only foresaw, but predestined the punishment which it was fit they should receive; and yet that it could not properly be said, that he had predestined them to death, or damnation.

Hence it has been contended, that the only difference between Hincmar and his opponent consists in this, that while the one asserts that God, foreseeing the sins which the reprobate would voluntarily commit, predestined and condemned them to eternal death, because of those sins, the other, acknowledging that God prepared and predestined the punishment, will not allow that he predestined the guilty themselves individually to endure it.

In speaking of the ancient predestinarians, Hincmar says, that they were guilty of advancing four particular errors. The first, that God condemns men for sins which they have not committed, but would have committed, had they lived. The second, that baptism doth not take away original sin, in respect to those who are not of the number of the predestined. The third, that there is no difference between prescience and predestination. The fourth, that God has predestined some men to sin and damnation. Of these errors, Hincmar admits, that the later predestinarians did not hold the first; that they greatly modified the second and third; and that, in

respect to the fourth, they only asserted, that God has predestined the reprobate to damnation, but not to sin.

Hincmar enters into the abstrusest questions connected with the main inquiry; and it is worthy of observation, that, like every other controversialist engaged in this dispute, he seems studiously anxious to intimate his consciousness of the difficulty of the subject, and of the danger to which he was exposed of passing the proper bounds of human reason. There is this also to be remarked, that often as the arguments employed seem rash, or unfounded, they involve some truth, or some warning, which, so far as it goes, deserves the earnest consideration of Christian students. Thus as it is the prayer of the church, that all men may be saved, we ought to believe that it is God's will that all should be saved. "Why then," it will be asked, "are not all saved.?" The answer is, "Because they will not. They that love darkness rather than light, injustice instead of justice, and sin rather than holiness, destroy themselves."

Such was the character of the controversy on predestination in the middle ages of the church. In its general features it closely resembled the disputes of an earlier period, when the powers of the human mind were taxed to explain, not how the Deity counsels and decrees, but how he subsists and acts. Little progress, however, seems to have been made towards the determination of the main question. Parties were almost equally balanced. Hincmar's severity provoked the censure of many who might otherwise have approved of his zeal. Even the reigning pontiff was unfavourable to his proceedings: and though he would not take part against an archbishop in behalf of a simple monk; it was evident from the tone of his

language on the subject, that he had no wish to aid Hincmar in his oppressive conduct.

But while these powerful controversialists were employing against each other, not only their high intellectual endowments, but the influence of their rank and station, Gottschalk himself was kept a prisoner, and continued to endure whatever hardships and sufferings the power of the archbishop could inflict. Still he preserved an unbroken resolution. The conviction of the truth of his opinions, and of the holiness of his cause, was intensely impressed upon his mind. According to the spirit of the age in which he lived, he offered to submit to any of those ordeals by which it was then commonly believed that innocence or guilt might be most readily proved. "Would," he said, "that it might please thee, O God, to give me strength to fulfil this wish, and then that my truth and integrity might be tried so as to make them evident to all beholders!" And the method of trial which he proposed was this: namely, that four casks should be filled with boiling water, oil, and pitch, and that he should be cast into them, one after the other. "The Lord being with me," he added, "defending the truth, I doubt not but that I should come forth safe and unharmed." Whether Hincmar dare not risk his cause and dignity, by submitting them to such a trial, or, which is more probable, had too much regard for humanity to allow his prisoner to expose himself to unnecessary torture, has not been determined. But Gottschalk did not long survive these efforts to prove the justice of his complaint. When ready to expire, application was made to the archbishop, to allow him the rites of the church. The archbishop refused them unless he would recant. This Gottschalk still firmly refused to do;

and he tranquilly breathed his last, assured that it was better for him to remain uncheered by the ordinances which he most desired, than to throw a shade of doubt upon the doctrines which he believed to be those of God and his word.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ROMAN PONTIFFS—CONTEST WITH THE TEMPORAL POWER—
GREGORY VII.

THE annals of the church present, in their general character, a dreary aspect during the period with which we are now concerned. Controversy when it exhibits the anxiety of earnest and conscientious minds, to settle important points of doctrine or discipline, is no proof of the existence of a schismatical, or unhealthy state of feeling among Christians. But it is far otherwise, when the minds of men are agitated by curious questions respecting matters beyond the proper limits of human argument ; or when they are excited and amused by the display of a subtle ingenuity, labouring to enlarge the simple edifice of evangelical faith by its vain suppositions and creations.

As the logic of the schoolmen became more and more the favourite instrument of theologians in the conduct of inquiry, the tendency to dispute proportionally increased. The injury which this produced is not so apparent in any great public controversy which it was calculated to excite, as in its effects upon the minds of the clergy and scholars of the age. Almost every point of religion became in its turn the subject of dispute in the little circle of the college, or the school. Under the pretence of bringing forth all that an adversary could invent,

the acute theologian as often took the side of the opponent, as of the champion of the faith. The habit of treating the most sacred subjects in a strain of bold rhetoric or subtle questioning, was fatal, in many cases, to humble piety, and the proper virtues of Christian faith. It was not from a base and slothful ignorance, or from the grossness of a degraded sensuality, that the darkness of the middle ages derived its most appalling character. An infidelity existed peculiar to the period and invested with qualities especially dangerous to an age when real liberty, and sound learning, were so little known. As this was the offspring of scholastic speculation, so it became the parent of those wild theories which involved both the visible world, and the world of spirits, in an impenetrable cloud of error.

Had the church, or mankind at large, been long left exposed to these unhealthy influences, it would have required some stupendous miracle to bring them back to a moderate state of freedom and vigour. But every now and then, even in the worst times, some counteracting power came into action ; some character arose which roused attention, and altered the notions of men as to particular principles of duty ; or some event took place which turned the sluggish stream of thought into another channel, and so gave it a more rapid movement.

The tenth century presents one of the gloomiest chapters in the history of the papacy. A feeling of horror is inspired by the terrific abuses of authority, which led to the elevation of most of the pontiffs in the earlier part of this period. After two or three possessors of the papal throne, at the beginning of the century, had been deprived of their dignity by successful rivals, the infamous

Theodora, the mother-in-law of Alberic, count of Tuscany, began to exercise her hateful control in the Roman church. John X., for whom she entertained the most violent passion, was originally raised, at her instigation, first, to the bishopric of Bologna, and then to the archiepiscopal see of Ravenna. Her son-in-law, the count of Tuscany, enjoyed, at this time, an almost absolute authority in Rome. No sooner, therefore, had the papal throne become vacant by the death of Lando, in 914, than Theodora prevailed upon Alberic to obtain it for her paramour. Raised to this high station, John X. still pursued his licentious course of life. But such was the degraded state of both the clergy and the people, that his vices lessened neither his power nor his grandeur. A successful war covered all his offences against virtue and holiness. The glory of a victory over the Saracens was better calculated, in that degenerate age, to dazzle the eyes of the world, than all the splendours of evangelical grace. For fourteen years did this wicked man preside over the church of Rome, and influenced, by the power of his station, the common destinies of Christendom. His end corresponded to the general tenor of his life. Marozia, Theodora's daughter, married, on the death of Alberic, his successor in the marquisate of Tuscany. Her jealousy, and that of her husband, was violently excited by the effort of the pontiff to aggrandize his own relations. Disregarding, therefore, the connexion between him and her mother, Marozia formed a plot against the unsuspecting pope. He was seized, thrown into prison, and there murdered.

After the two short reigns of Leo VI. and Stephen VII., Marozia began to execute her ambitious designs with regard to the pontificate. Infamous as was the character

of her mother Theodora, her own was still more degraded.* It is generally acknowledged that she had lived in adultery with pope Sergius III. The son which she had by him was now about twenty-five years of age; and on this young man, the offspring of her infamous amours, she resolved to bestow the papal crown. Her power was sufficiently great to enable her to accomplish this design. The new pontiff assumed the title of John XI. But he was destined to enjoy his dignity for only a brief period. Gui, Marozia's consort, died not long after her marriage. The wealth and influence which she possessed were sufficient to render her offer to marry Hugo, king of Lombardy, acceptable to that prince. No sooner, however, had the espousals taken place, than she was obliged to seek refuge in the castle of St. Angelo, from the fury of a younger son, whom Hugo had enraged by some personal insult. The newly-created pontiff was exposed to the same danger; and was glad to shelter himself with his mother. Their attempt to defend themselves proved abortive. They were dragged from their retreat, thrown into prison, and there kept, till the death of John XI. again left the seat vacant which he, and his predecessor, had so unworthily filled.

A brief interval, during which the pontifical dignity was possessed by Leo VII. exhibited the effects of those improvements which so readily follow the reformation of manners on the part of the

* "Quæ tunc facies," exclaims the annalist, "sanctæ ecclesiæ Romanæ? Quam sœdissima, cum Romæ dominarentur potentissimæ æque ac sordidissimæ meretrices? Quarum arbitrio mutarentur sedes, darentur episcopi, et quod auditu horrendum et infandum est, intruderentur in Sedem Petri earum anasii pseudopontifices, qui non sint nisi ad consignanda tanta tempora in catalogo Romanorum Pontificum scripti."—*Annales Eccles. Baronii*, t. xv. p. 571.

clergy. But the reign of Leo VII. was too short to enable him to accomplish any fundamental change in the affairs of the church.* He died in the fourth year of his pontificate; and his successor, Stephen VIII., was so hated by the people, that they excited a tumult against him, and inflicted such wounds on his face that he could never again appear in public. The successors of this pontiff were little distinguished either for their virtues or their vices; but in the year 956, Octavian, a young man, only eighteen years of age, was promoted to the dignity, through the influence of his father, the patrician Alberic.

It has been especially remarked, that he was the first of the Roman pontiffs who changed his name on ascending the papal chair. However respectable that of Octavian for its classical associations, it sounded but badly in the ears of those who felt the importance of giving an apostolic air to everything connected with their church. The new pope, therefore, assumed the title of John XII.; but he seems to have been utterly indifferent to what the world thought of his conduct, or character. He lived a life of riot and debauchery, and it was only when threatened with ruin, that he could be prevailed upon to listen to the admonitions of his friends. The emperor Otho I. after having granted him important aid, represented to him the danger and infamy of his present course. But this produced no permanent effect upon his

* Some verses on this pope, by the old Latin writer Flodoardus, show how striking a contrast his character exhibited to most of the other pontiffs of that age:—

“Septimus exurgit leo, nec tamen ista volutans,
Nec curans, apicis mundi nec celsa requirens.
Sola Dei quæ sunt alacri sub pectore volvens,
Culminaque evitans, oblata subire renuntians.”

Baron. An. 939:

mind. The emperor, therefore, readily listened to the call of the Roman people, who could no longer endure the oppression of so degraded and odious a tyrant. Entering Rome at the head of a body of troops, he took possession of the city. The terrified pontiff fled; and the people willingly pledged themselves by an oath never to elect another pope without the counsel of the emperor.* A synod was then called, and formal articles of complaint were preferred against the fugitive pontiff. Instead, however, of his endeavouring to conciliate his justly indignant accusers, he anathematized and excommunicated them. This was regarded as a proof of his incorrigible wickedness; and the synod, with the emperor at its head, at once deposed him. Leo VIII. was placed in the vacant dignity, at Otho's express desire. He is spoken of as a good and virtuous man; but his short reign was disturbed by the return of John, who endeavoured to excite the people to revolt, and to restore him to authority. Strange to say, he succeeded in this attempt. Horrible barbarities were perpetrated; and John rejoiced in finding that he could still persuade a sufficient number of bishops to support his cause, and form a synod to pronounce the condemnation of his rival. For a few months, he revelled again in his old licentiousness; but during some disgraceful nocturnal adventure, beyond the gates of Rome, he received a blow, from the effects of which he died at the end of a week.

As if resolved to emulate the wickedness of their pontiffs, the Roman people exhibited the utmost contempt

* That is, the rights of the clergy and the people being preserved entire, the election was not to be confirmed but in the presence of the emperor's ambassadors; namely, all means were to be employed, *ut canonice et juste fiat*.—Baron. An. 962.

for the oaths which they had taken to the emperor. Instead of immediately recalling the pious Leo VIII., they elected a new pope, who, though a cardinal-deacon, readily put himself into a position for resisting the emperor by force of arms. But Otho lost no time in chastising their breach of faith. He besieged the city; compelled the people to give up Benedict; and reinstated Leo with a pomp which was rendered so much the more conspicuous by the public humiliation of his rival. Having accomplished this object, which had less real connexion with the interests of the church, than with the aggrandizement of imperial power, Otho carried the deposed pope with him into Germany. Hamburgh was the place of Benedict's exile. Misfortune had greatly advanced his natural good qualities and talents. He rendered himself dear to the people among whom he passed the remainder of his days, by many proofs of piety and devotion. Happy would it have been for the Roman people, could the irregularity of his election, and the troubles which attended it, have been sufficiently forgotten to allow of his preventing the unworthy successor of Leo VIII. from occupying the seat which he might have so much more creditably filled.

John XIII. is said to have acted with such tyranny, that the Romans hated him as a despot, whose expulsion they ought to secure at any risk. Again, therefore, the church was involved in the most melancholy confusion. The pope could not resist the violence with which he was attacked. He fled from his assailants; and it was only by the power of the emperor that, after more than a year's exile, he recovered his dignity.

Strikingly indicative as these occurrences were of the miserable state of affairs in the church, the fate of Bene-

dict VI., who succeeded John XIII., affords a still stronger proof of the little regard now entertained for the highest of ecclesiastical authorities. Having been cast into prison, the unhappy Benedict was helplessly exposed to the violence of his powerful enemies. Among these were Crescentius, the son of John X., and Theodora. His fate was soon determined. He died strangled in the dungeon, to which he had been consigned. Boniface VII., by whom he was succeeded, had scarcely obtained the dignity, when his tyrannical excesses roused the indignation of the people, and he was obliged to save himself by fleeing to Constantinople. Fourteen years of trouble and confusion followed this event. Other popes were elected. Boniface at length ventured to return. His influence with some few powerful people was sufficient to enable him to set aside the reigning pontiff, John XIV., and to reseat himself in his place. The deposed pope was immediately cast into prison. There he died of hunger and disease. Boniface himself only survived a few months. Cut off by a sudden death, his vices and arbitrary conduct had rendered him so hateful even to his former adherents, that they seized his dead body, dragged it into the public streets, and there mangled it in the sight of the approving populace.

History is silent respecting the obscure reign of
A. D. John XV. He was succeeded by another pontiff
985. who assumed the same name, and retained his dignity about ten years. Avarice, in all its worst forms, seems to have debased the actions of this pope ; and even the things which the church held most sacred, were not safe from his desire to change everything into money. The short pontificate of Gregory V., a young man whom the emperor Otho III., his uncle, raised to the see, was as inglorious as it was brief ; but he was succeeded by the

virtuous and learned Gerbert, the only pontiff among those who had any claim to respect, of whom we have sufficient memorials to enable us to understand his actual worth.

This celebrated man was archbishop of Ravenna,* at the time when the well-employed influence of Otho secured his election to the papal throne. It is a remarkable fact, that he had long been distinguished for his bold and judicious opposition to the growing tyranny of the popes. Among the few important events in the latter part of the tenth century was the assembling of the Council of Rheims. Hugo Capet had invested himself not only with the power, but with the insignia of royalty in France. But he required all the assistance he could obtain to establish his authority against the rival pretensions of Charles, duke of Lothringia, the only branch of the Carlovingian race whom he had to fear. It is a painful fact that, in every age, the benefices of the church have been employed by the great and powerful to subserve their own interests, rather than those of the church for which the benefices were created. Hugh Capet, accordingly, in the exercise of his authority, gave the archbishopric of Rheims, then vacant, to Arnulph, the nephew of his rival, and hoped thereby to secure the aid of the prince both in his political and military proceedings. He received the befitting reward of such a tampering with holy things. Arnulph, the young archbishop, opened, or was said to do so, the gates of Rheims to the troops of his relative. Indignant at the supposed treason, Hugh Capet immediately took measures for depriving Arnulph of his see. For this purpose he applied to the pope, desiring him to assert his right to ratify or annul such high ecclesiastical appointments.

* *Annales Eccles. Baron.* t. xvi. p. 389.

Arnulph and his friends were not idle spectators of this proceeding. They also sought the pontiff's support, and John XV. was sufficiently politic to see how much might be gained by keeping two such parties in suspense. But no sooner was it known that he inclined to the side of the archbishop, than the offended monarch resolved on putting the power of Rome to the proof. Instead of yielding to the inclinations of the pope, he encouraged the French clergy in asserting their independence. A synod was assembled at Rheims, in which the most distinguished members asserted sentiments equally characterized by their good sense and intrepidity. First among these champions of the freedom and purity of the church, was Arnulphus, archbishop of Orleans, and the intimate friend of Gerbert. To the arguments which some of the prelates brought in defence of the notion that the pope only was the proper judge of bishops, he replied by showing the foundation upon which the pontifical authority was based.

After strongly asserting that all due respect ought to be rendered to the holy see, and to the canons of the church, he warned his brethren that they ought to be especially cautious never to allow either the silence of the Roman pontiffs, or any new decrees which they might pass, to interfere with the authority of the ancient ecclesiastical constitutions. Were the pope permitted to do aught which could tend to lessen the validity of the established canons, or principles of the church, all order would be endangered, and everything would be left dependent on the will of a single man. Not to suffer such a state of things was not to derogate, he said, from the dignity or privileges of the supreme pontiff. If the bishop of Rome proved a man of worth by his learning and his

piety, nothing was to be apprehended either from his silence or his proceedings ; but what might be expected if the contrary were the case ?

Arnulphus then proceeded to express his grief at the aspect which the affairs of the church at that time presented ; and his sketch of the character and history of the popes who had reigned during the preceding half century, was as dark a picture as the saddest imagination could have drawn. “ But must bishops,” he indignantly exclaimed, “ whose piety and worth are everywhere known, be compelled to submit themselves to such monsters as these ? To wretches destitute of learning either sacred or profane, and as destitute of principle as of knowledge ? ” This bold speaker next complained that the highest offices of the church generally were bestowed upon the least qualified, and often on the basest of the clergy, upon men who ought rather to be described as walking statues than teachers of the gospel, or even reasonable beings. He advised that, when the see of Rome was occupied by unworthy popes, it would be better for those who were interested in the welfare of the church to consult the several metropolitan bishops, whose character and experience entitled them to respect, instead of seeking advice or aid in that city, “ which now only declared in favour of those who gave most, and weighed its judgments by the coin which bought them.”

It is easy to discover in the sentiments thus expressed, the working of that grand and purifying spirit which has characterized, throughout all ages, the innermost circle of God’s people. Though resisted by the world, and by the larger portion of the visible church, it has ever kept its place, and exercised its sublime and benignant office, in the heart of the mystical body of which Christ is the

head. Hence the testimony, to the truth, heard with more or less distinctness, from century to century. Hence the constant antagonism to error and corruption to be ever found in this or that quarter of the church ; and the tendency to reformation discoverable now in the darkness of the tenth century, and becoming still more conspicuous in the thirteenth, when Dante and Petrarch repeated, in their own peculiar way, the sentiments of Arnulphus of Orleans.

The archbishop of Rheims having confessed his treason, was formally deprived both of his dignity and his priesthood. Gerbert was elected by the bishops to the vacant see, and the noble talents, as well as the virtues with which he was endowed, not only justified his appointment to this important position in the church of France, but rendered his further elevation of the highest moment to the interests of religion. Such, however, was the state of ecclesiastical affairs at this period, that the prince who had been solemnly declared unworthy of the sacerdotal name, had sufficient interest with the pope to obtain a reversal of his sentence, to procure the deposition of the virtuous Gerbert, and his banishment from the diocese.

But these circumstances, so little creditable to the rulers of the church, proved favourable to the advancement of the exiled prelate. Otho III. raised him first to the archbishopric of Ravenna, and then to the papal chair. His efforts in this exalted position to improve the state of learning, to introduce important reforms in the discipline of the church, and to correct, as well by his example as precepts, the character of the clergy, promised the best results. As an instance of his amiable disposition, it deserves to be recorded that, instead of showing any resentment towards the prince, for whom he had been

driven from Rheims, he treated him with dignified respect and friendship. On being elected to the papacy, he wrote to him, expressing his readiness to acknowledge him as the rightful possessor of the see; but, at the same time, warning him to repent of the sins, and correct the errors, with which he had been charged.

Sylvester was anxious to promote the interests of learning. His own erudition was sufficiently extensive and various to make him the wonder of his times. Had his station been less exalted, he would, probably, have found himself exposed to the dangers from which men of such character so narrowly escaped in that unlettered age. His acquaintance with mathematics, and with the physical sciences, led many to regard him as a student of the unlawful arts of magic. The suspicion was only cautiously breathed, but Sylvester was indebted to his rank, rather than to the good sense of his contemporaries, for his protection against the dungeon or the pile.

Notwithstanding the liberal spirit and character of this pontiff,* he could do but little towards improving the state of affairs in his church. The power of circumstances, and the still greater power of opinion, were too mighty for resistance by men of his class. He could oppose the papal invasion of the rights of the church, while one of those whose liberties were threatened; but he could not oppose the pretensions of the papacy, while he

* His words in one of his Epistles (ad Siquinum archiep.) "*Quod si ipse Romanus episcopus in patrem peccaverit, sæpiusque admonitus ecclesiam non audierit, hic, inquam, Rom. ep. præcepto Dei est habendus sicut ethnicus et publicanus.—Sit lex communis ecclesiæ Catholicæ evangelium, apostoli, prophetæ, canones Spiritu Dei constituti et totius mundi reverentia consecrati, decreta sedis apostolicæ ab his non discordantia.*"

seemed to be chargeable with the support of its privileges and dignity.

Some degree of tranquillity was enjoyed by the church, and the Italian states, while the power of the emperors was only properly modified by the influence of such men as Sylvester. But his successors had little of his wisdom or learning. They were raised to the papal chair by their political connexions, or by their wealth. Thus Benedict VIII., who died in 1024, was succeeded by his brother, a simple layman; and he again was succeeded by his nephew, a lad, only twelve years of age, the gold expended by his family being sufficient to blind the highest dignitaries of the church to the infamy of this election. But never had Rome suffered more deplorably from the vices and degradation of her clergy. Such was the effect of the contempt shown by Benedict IX. for religion and law, that the people rushed into every species of mad licentiousness. The highways soon became impassable to the traveller. Robbers and murderers met the unhappy pilgrim wherever he went; and Rome itself was crowded with assassins.

The distress and confusion which now became universal at length roused the indignation of the people against the pontiff. Benedict was driven from the city. Another pope was elected; but the power of Benedict's family secured his speedy restoration. It might have been supposed, that the lesson which he had received would have in some degree, corrected his vices. But he continued the same reckless course, and finding that it would be impossible to resist the fury of the people, again excited against him, he determined to recover as much as he could of the money which had been expended on the pontificate. He, therefore, sold it to the best bidder.

This was Johannes Gratianus; who, on being admitted to the dignity, assumed the title of Gregory VI, and exhibited both talents and virtues which, under other circumstances, might have made him a valuable friend to his church and country. But the simony of which he had been guilty was too glaring even for his corrupt age, when committed by a man who had any pretensions to piety. Such offences might be tolerated in those who openly defied the laws of the church: but they were not to be borne in the case of those who reminded mankind, by their partial good qualities, that virtue and religion were respectable.

Gregory VI. after attempting some useful reforms, allowed himself to be deposed, without resistance. Benedict IX. again made his appearance; but at last, touched with repentance, he retired from Rome to spend his days in prayer and fasting. Leo IX. died a prisoner among the Normans, whose ravages he had boldly resisted; and his immediate successors were involved in a perpetual struggle to retain with the see of Rome, the scarcely less important see of Florence.

But by far the most eventful, and most stirring portion of the history of the papacy, in the middle ages, is that which concerns the memorable struggle of Gregory VII., the famous Hildebrand, with the temporal power as represented by the monarchs of his time. Corrupt and ignorant as many of the pontiffs had proved themselves, the theoretical principles upon which their authority was grounded became daily better understood by the subtle casuists of the schools and monasteries. In one respect, the vices of individual popes, and the public rebuke which the church suffered on their account, may have even promoted the establishment of the papacy itself.

The most devoted friends of the Roman church could not fail to perceive, that unless they could show that its authority rested on foundations, beyond the reach of scandal, it must soon perish. Two methods were accordingly pursued in its defence. On the one hand an appeal was made to supposititious decretals; and, on the other, every art which reason could employ was called into exercise to prove that the papacy was, by its very nature and essence, a divine institution.

The introduction of the celebrated Pseudo-Isidorian decrees was the fruit of the former plan. A collection of the canons of the church, as introduced by various councils and synods, had been made as early as the sixth century, by Dionysius Exiguus. This work was enlarged and modified in the different churches of the West, by the decisions of their own provincial synods. About the middle of the seventh century, the collection was published in Spain, under the name of the venerable Isidore of Seville. His well-known piety and wisdom gave additional authority to the work; and it was soon received throughout the West, as containing a faithful abstract of the rules by which the church and its members were to be governed. But it was not from a source of this kind, that the divines of Rome could derive the arguments needed to justify their policy. Another collection, therefore, under the name of Isidore of Seville was produced. This mainly consisted of the decretals of the pontiffs from the end of the fourth century, and of the briefs and epistles which had appeared with the names of the most venerated of their order. A moderate acquaintance, however, with history and with the rules of criticism, seemed sufficient to annul the authority claimed for this collection. The epistles said to have been written by Roman bishops

of the first or second century, were in the mongrel French-Latin of the eighth or ninth. They allude to subjects which belonged both to the spirit and the circumstances of the middle ages ; and the Scripture quotations are from the Latin version of Jerome. But so little attention was paid in the ninth century to considerations of this kind, that the want of any fair proof of authenticity or genuineness, was no obstacle to the general reception of the work. The name of Isidore of Seville was accepted as a guarantee of its value, and each succeeding century added to the weight of its authority.

This will afford some idea of the mode by which the advocates of the Roman church, at this period, sought to support it against the destructive influence of its own infamous ministers. In later times, many of the virtuous and eminent scholars which it has produced, have shown themselves as ready as the divines of the reformation to acknowledge, that the chief portion of the Pseudo-Isidorian collection was fabricated in the middle ages. But it did its work at the time when it was needed ; and that which the popes wanted in personal worth, or dignity, was supplied by constant reference to tradition and precedent.

But this would not have been sufficient of itself. A grand appeal was necessary to the highest principles of religious faith and obedience. The power of the church was to be exhibited as independent of, and superior to, all earthly control ; as involving an intrinsic right to the homage of the world, and its potentates ; and as bestowing, therefore, upon those charged with its ministration, a higher dignity than any known among secular states or princes. It would be difficult to assign a positive date for the origin of this theory, if so it may be called. Its

harmony with some of the profoundest feelings of devotion, on the one side, and with those of human ambition, on the other, might justify our attributing it to the earliest times in which evangelical simplicity began to decline. But it required a man of equal genius and courage to act according to the ripened theory of ecclesiastical supremacy. Hildebrand was endowed with the highest qualities which can fit a man for action. He was no less interested in the cause, than prepared for the execution of his designs. To charge him with a mere selfish ambition; to represent him as destitute of devout convictions; to describe his conduct as the result of a complicated mass of proud dispositions, perverted views, and sensual passion, may serve the purposes of controversy, but not the fair legitimate objects of history. Hildebrand was the great man of his age. Not superior indeed to its influences, his greatness, like that of other remarkable men, owed some of its chief characteristics to the period in which he lived. He felt, in his own soul, the fierceness of the struggle carried on between the antagonist principles of the church and the state. Balanced as these powers had for ages seemed to be, Hildebrand was intensely possessed with the idea, that by throwing the force of his own determined energy into the scale, the controversy might be settled for ever in favour of the church, and the pontificate.

There were great questions immediately at issue; and upon these the whole controversy was at present to turn. Hildebrand, who was the son of a carpenter at Saone, had been, from early youth, an earnest observer of the conflict between his church and the civil power. As a member of the Benedictine order, he enjoyed the advantage of a more enlightened cultivation than that which would

have fallen to his lot among the other religious orders. His natural abilities, and the diligence with which he pursued every branch of scholastical learning, recommended him to the notice of the principal men of the age. He became the friend of Johannes Gratianus, afterwards Gregory VI., and of Leo IX., who ordained him subdeacon, and placed him at the head of the monastery of Saint Paul, a richly-endowed institution, but which, according to the depraved spirit of the age, had become a nursery of vice. Hildebrand soon corrected the evils which had crept into the establishment. Discipline was restored; the revenues of the house were properly administered; and the ability which Hildebrand displayed in the good management of his monastery recommended him to other offices of trust and difficulty.

In the midst of the employments which were thus pressed upon him, he acquired both power and wealth. His keen, politic spirit enabled him speedily to discover the weakness of his superiors. Both the good and evil qualities of his character were fostered by the circumstances in which he was placed. Naturally fiery and ambitious, he could not fail to perceive that by pursuing a bold and resolute course, he might raise himself to the highest place in the government of his church. But, far from being wholly under the influence of a selfish ambition, or from thinking only of his own aggrandizement, he sincerely desired the promotion of those interests which he regarded as intimately connected with the advancement of religion and humanity.

In 1044 there were three pretenders, we have seen, to the papal throne, Benedict IX., Silvester III., and John Gratianus. The last of these three enjoyed the respect of a numerous party, and once entertained the hope

that, notwithstanding the simonical transactions which had placed him on the throne, he might secure, by his good qualities and acts, the confirmation of his authority. But the disorders which had so long existed, and which were still increasing, through the conduct of Benedict and Silvester, alarmed and afflicted the friends of Rome. They found it impossible to correct the growing evils by their complaints or petitions. No one was ready to sacrifice his supposed rights to the good of the church; and it, therefore, became incumbent upon those who desired its deliverance to call to their aid an auxiliary sufficiently powerful to accomplish a reform. The newly-elected emperor, Henry III., seemed to be the potentate most likely to effect this great object. He was accordingly appealed to; and, in the year 1046, he arrived in Italy, at the head of a numerous body of troops.

So confident was Gregory VI. that he should be able to secure the favour of the emperor, that he proceeded to Piacenza, to welcome him on his arrival. But, instead of being rewarded for his complacency, as he expected, or of obtaining that consideration which his good qualities really merited, he was formally deposed, with the two other rival popes, in the synod held at Sutri. The regret which many felt at his deposition, was increased by the fresh instance which he afforded, on the occasion, of a thoughtful and virtuous character. Instead of attempting to resist the decree of the council, he frankly confessed the sin of which he had been guilty in procuring his election by means of money; and, stripping himself of his pontifical robes, meekly prayed that he might be pardoned the offence into which he had been tempted.*

* "Agnoscens se non posse juste honorem tanti sacerdotii administrare, ex pontificali sella exiliens ac semet ipsum pontificalia indu-

A difficulty now occurred as to the choice of a new pope. Such was the state of the Roman church, and its clergy, at this period, that not one of its body could be found worthy of admission to the vacant seat. Suidger, bishop of Bamberg, was therefore elected pope, and assumed the title of Clement II. But this was plainly owing to the influence of the emperor; and the effect of his interference was still more evident, when, on the death of Clement, which happened about a year after his elevation, the bishop of Brixen, Damasus II., was raised to the pontificate by the same means. The reign of this pope was as short as that of his predecessor; and with the elevation of the next possessor of the papal chair, Leo IX., that movement was commenced which brought the powers of Hildebrand's capacious mind into full display. He had already adopted, in their severest form, the opinions of the party which now began loudly to proclaim the superiority of the church to the state. The influence which he exercised on the mind of Leo IX. is remarkably shown by the fact, that he persuaded him not to enter Rome with the style and dignity of pontiff, but in the garb of a pilgrim. He had committed a grievous sin, said Hildebrand, in taking advantage of the emperor's patronage to raise himself to the chair of St. Peter; and it was now his duty to manifest repentance, and to refrain from any exercise of his functions till his election was confirmed at Rome, in the old and accustomed form. Moved by the fervour, or convinced by the arguments of Hildebrand, he even consented to perform this somewhat perilous act of humility; and the remainder of his pontificate afforded indisputable proofs of the growing power of the subdeacon.

menta exuens, postulata venia, summi sacerdotii dignitatem deposuit."

—Desiderius Bibl. Pat. Lug. t. xviii.

But Hildebrand was at this time contending for an object worthy of a great and exalted mind. He saw that while the high offices in the church, its honours and benefices, were at the free disposal of princes and courtiers, the crime of simony would always exist to an alarming extent. Wealth will purchase influence more readily than merit or piety can make good its claims. Even where it is not used in the direct purchase of spiritual offices, it is often employed, so far as they are left at the disposal of irresponsible patrons, to the degradation of the church, and the oppression of its ministers. There is in the eyes of those who occupy lofty stations in the world, a dazzling grace about wealth and its possessors, which conceals vice, and bestows lustre on the meanest pretensions to virtue, or ability. Thus the greatest men, both in church and state, when left to themselves in the disposal of ecclesiastical benefices, have ever shown a disposition to promote the wealthy; to indulge the exorbitant claims of rank and influence; to listen to the whisper in the ear, rather than to the open and honest voice of public testimony. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," is a precept which might be applied as directly to the management of church patronage, as to any of the other affairs with which men are chargeable. But it must surely have been utterly lost sight of by those who, being invested with authority in the appointment of ministers of God's word and sacraments, have yielded to the influence of wealth, that which ought to have been given with a single eye to spiritual worth, experience, and devotion.

The abuses which threatened the Roman church with ruin in the eleventh century sprung from the same source as those which have in later times lowered the dignity, and

crippled the energies of other churches. Simony performs its baleful work under various forms and disguises, but it is always followed by similar evils. The character of the clergy is corrupted; the standard of virtue is brought down to the ground; the world learns to suspect the church, and the church to defy rather than teach the world.

These evils, gigantic though they were, had scarcely reached half their growth, when the reforming party at Rome began its operations. It was evident, however, that if the highest offices of the Christian ministry might be given by an act of arbitrary power, the other appointments of the church would be made after a similar fashion; and that thus a large proportion of its teachers would consist of men the least fitted for the work of pastors and evangelists.

If any reformation, therefore, was contemplated, it could only be commenced by a bold attack upon the simoniacal spirit which had given birth to this monstrous corruption. Hildebrand, and his party, believed that they would be striking at the root of the evil, if they could effectually dispute the right of the emperor to interfere with the election of a Roman pontiff. In theory, they were fully justified not only in what they thought, but in their determination to resist the interference of the foreign potentate. It is impossible to form a notion of any greater absurdity, in the management of public affairs, than the subjection of a church to the will of a man who knows nothing but of courts and camps. He may be good, generous, and great; but suppose him standing up in an assembly formed of the apostles, ministers, and disciples of Jesus Christ, raising his sceptre, or his truncheon, pointing to some favoured

familiar of one of his nobles, and commanding them to elect him to the most difficult, the most responsible, of the offices in their church; suppose this otherwise good and enlightened temporal potentate thus to intrude himself into the sanctuary, and who, if an apostolic spirit prevailed, would not lament his error, or implore him to desist?

But this was the state of things, when Hildebrand found himself placed at the head of a party, the object of which was to correct the abuses which had thus arisen. Churchmen have, in all ages, been subject to blame for that which is almost inseparable from the habits of thought generated by their pursuits and occupations. They naturally look back to the origin of their order. They are bound to strive for its privileges, and for the purity of the principles by which alone it can possess any claim to the respect of society, or the consideration of the church itself. There is something eminently primitive in the rules by which Christian ministers ought to be chosen; to be guided in their labours, and to determine their relations to the community of the faithful. Whatever is of later date than that of the apostolic age, must depend, not upon authority, but upon argument, or supposition. The inferiority of such a species of appeal must be at once acknowledged; and yet it is on the practice of times comparatively modern, on precedents and examples created by the most selfish of ambitious, or the most unreasoning of worldly, men, that the rule for the disposal of church patronage is generally established.

Hence the question which Hildebrand had to resolve was not difficult, so far as it could be viewed theoretically. His duty also, in this respect, was comparatively easy. The ministers of Christ could only be properly chosen from among the disciples of Christ, and the signs

of true discipleship could only be determined by the genuine members of his mystical body. When this principle was rudely violated, and the statesman sought to accomplish his designs at the expense of the church, the advocate of holiness and Christian liberty had to perform a duty which it required but simplicity and firmness to execute with the hope of a divine blessing.

But the state of things at the period referred to, was very different to that in which the path of a reformer would have been so direct and open. The church itself had sacrificed its best claims to independence. It had become corrupt and servile. The qualities which originally entitled it to reverence, had gradually been bartered for surreptitious pretensions to authority. It had intruded itself into the province of politics; and when the temporal power began to interfere with its concerns, it justified that interference by showing that the church had ceased to confine itself to its more proper functions. Such, moreover, had been the vices of the clergy for many generations, that the civil magistrate, charged with the moral, because with the safe and peaceable preservation of the state, could not wholly overlook the corrupt practices of a body which claimed so large a measure of authority among the people. Independent, therefore, of any abstract right to a share in the government of the church, the temporal head of a nation was urged by the most forcible of practical arguments, by considerations of the most pressing expediency, to see that the affairs of religion were not left to the sole management of its corrupt ministers. Had Christianity been only another species of philosophy; had its teachers desired no other influence than that which they might exercise on studious and speculative minds, the intrusion of the civil

magistrate would have savoured of rudeness and tyranny. But the clergy had long openly declared their pretensions to a power in which the original spiritual element was daily becoming less effective, and the worldly more apparent and injurious. The qualities with which they had invested religion had the same earthly tendency; and Christianity, which, appealing by its very nature to the most vital principles of humanity, would have revolutionized the world, as a sick man is revolutionized into health, was perverted, and made to act in the contrary direction; so that instead of averting the moral diseases of mankind, it made them still more headstrong and fanatical.

No ecclesiastic of his times was better prepared than Hildebrand to take an important part in the government of the church. He had passed his youth in diligent attention to those studies which were best calculated to enlarge and invigorate his mind; and as soon as he left the recesses of the monastery, he became engaged in the management of affairs, the knowledge of which quickly rendered him a bold and skilful politician.

In the course of a few years, several popes had ascended the throne, and, after a short reign, had either been obliged to resign the dignity, or had sunk into the grave, overwhelmed with fears and disgusts. During each of these pontificates, Hildebrand had exercised, either directly or indirectly, a controlling influence. Though occasionally resisted by the pride, or the reasonable jealousy of the ruling pope, such was the power which Hildebrand had gained, that his counsels always prevailed. Both the people and the clergy viewed him as the destined liberator of the world from the miseries of a degenerate age; and as the regenerator of the

church, which seemed ready to perish under the weight of its own corruptions.

A. D.
1058. On the death of Stephen IX. an effort was made by the nobility of Rome, to recover the power, of which the vigilance of Hildebrand and his party threatened to deprive them. Hastening to the election of a pontiff, they conferred the dignity upon Mincius, bishop of Velitra. But he was unable to retain his dignity, because Hildebrand, who was in Germany consulting with the emperor, disputed, on his return, the validity of the election. Nicholas II., who was indebted to this circumstance for his own elevation, readily entered into the views of Hildebrand; and it is easy to trace in the acts of the synod which was held in 1059 the working of that reforming spirit which was so soon to give laws to the church, and almost to the world.

According to the decisions of the council here referred to, and at which one hundred and thirteen bishops were present, the cardinals, for the future, were to exercise the chief influence in the election of the pope. If any pretender to the papal throne assumed the dignity, without being canonically elected by the cardinals, and approved by the voice of the other orders, both lay and clerical, he was to be regarded not as an apostolic pope, but as an apostate. Other indications are given in the acts of the synod of the general state of manners among the clergy of this age, and of the rude manner in which the people had sought to chastise their degeneracy. At the death of a pope, or of any other bishop, it was said, no seizure should be made of his estates, but they should descend to his successors. This apparent insecurity, however, of ecclesiastical property appears to be sufficiently accounted for by the moral depravity, which demanded the enact-

ment of some of the following canons. It is ordered, for example, that no person should be present at a mass performed by a priest known to keep a concubine; while the injunctions against simony are so various and severe, that it is evident the worst species of corruption must have prevailed throughout the entire range of ecclesiastical polity.

But the acts of this synod are also deserving of study, as showing the rapid development of those principles upon which Hildebrand was preparing to found his batteries, and raise his engines of war in his approaching struggle with the empire. By the sixth canon it was ordained that no clergyman should be entitled to hold a benefice on the presentation of a layman; by the ninth, that the clergy should not be judged by the lay magistrate. But suspicious as these enactments may seem, they were combined with others, which entitled the members of the synod to the profound regard of the true friends of the church; for by one of the canons it was decreed, that no priest should hold two churches at once, and by another, that laymen should not be advanced suddenly to ecclesiastical degrees, a custom which had lately become alarmingly prevalent, but should be subjected to a long and careful discipline between their ceasing from worldly occupations, and being admitted to holy orders. In respect to the popes themselves, it was declared, that if any one took possession of the pontifical chair, either by bribery, by intrigue, or by force, that is, without being unanimously and canonically elected by the cardinal-bishops, and the rest of the clergy, he should be regarded not as the lawful pope, but as an apostate; that it should be the duty of the cardinal-bishops, or of any other persons of known piety, whether clergy or

laymen, to expel the intruder; and that, if this could not be accomplished in Rome, the friends of the church and its liberties should assemble in any convenient place out of that city, in order to elect a pope more worthy of the sacred dignity; and that the person so elected should be regarded as the lawful pontiff, *salvo omnino imperatoris privilegio*, the rights of the emperor being preserved entire.

The death of Nicholas II. gave occasion to a contest for the throne, which threatened the church with another season of agitation and distress. Both parties in Rome anxiously sought the support of the emperor; and that of Hildebrand, or what may be termed the church party, was not backward in pressing its interests at court. But it was defeated by the superior wealth or influence of the Roman nobles, whose object it had long been to keep the papal chair at their own disposal. Hildebrand was refused an audience with the emperor. The cardinals who accompanied him were treated with similar disrespect; and they seem to have concluded that it was now only by the most decided course of action that the church could be delivered from the tyranny of a worldly and licentious faction. Assembling, therefore, according to the canon established in the late synod, the chief of the clergy proceeded to the election of a pope. Their choice fell on Anselm, bishop of Lucca, who assumed the title of Alexander II. So far, however, was the emperor from allowing that his privileges had been respected in this movement, that he immediately set up another pope as the rival of Alexander. An army was necessary to support this second pontiff, whose election was supposed to be justified by the assent of the bishops beyond the Alps. After a severe struggle, victory decided in

favour of Alexander; and from this period Hildebrand proceeded in his course with a bold step, and a determined aim, plainly showing that the actions and feelings which had given birth to many an indefinite wish in the minds of earlier churchmen, were now concentrated in one grand sentiment, mightier than any of the antagonist dispositions of the age.

Peter Damian, bishop of Ostia, whose rank as a cardinal, and near neighbourhood to Rome, were important additions to his other means of power, had well prepared the way for Hildebrand's success. Damian was one of the most remarkable men of the period. While he contended as strongly as Hildebrand for the reformation and independence of the church, he never lost sight of the principles of Christian moderation. Thus he strove to convince the Roman court, and the clergy at large, that nothing could justify a priest in taking the sword: that it was not lawful to defend even the faith by force of arms, much less the temporal goods, or outward rights of the church. It was the duty of the clergy, he contended, to make not merely the doctrine, but the example of Christ, their rule of action; and they were, therefore, bound to resist, and vanquish, the violence of worldly passion, not by a similar force, but by evangelical patience. The sword of the spirit, the word of God, was their proper weapon: and if Uzziah was punished for attempting to usurp the priest's office, much greater must be the chastisement due to the priest who should dare to assume the instruments of worldly warfare.

But this learned, pious, and humble man, exhibited his Christian simplicity in a still greater degree, when, addressing Alexander II., he reminded him, that there were two abuses which principally tended to confirm the clergy

in their pride and corruption. The one was, that excommunication was denounced in most of the papal decrees, and that for things of little consequence. Hence, he argued, that men were often punished more severely for breaking a human law, than they were for violating the commands of God. The other abuse alluded to was, that the inferior clergy might not charge their bishops in a higher court, or accuse them of any fault. "But this," he argues, "was both unreasonable, and contrary to the proper discipline of the church. For, is it not an instance of insufferable arrogance, pride, and vanity, that a bishop should claim to act as he pleases, and not condescend to hearken to the complaints of those who are under him, in things wherein he may be deceived: especially when they do not apply themselves to the secular judges, but to bishops, that they may honourably and gravely redress those grievances, the continued existence of which might provoke the smiles and ridicule of the laity? Is it not reasonable that he who is accused should justify and clear himself, or acknowledge his faults?"

In support of his argument, that bishops ought to receive with meekness and attention, the complaints of the people, and inferior clergy, Damian cites the example of St. Peter, who instead of haughtily silencing the remonstrances of the believers who were offended at his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, gave them a full account of his reasons for so doing. So also, in the case of David, who confessed his sin when reproved by Nathan; in that of Mary who so gently bore the rebuke of her sister Martha; and, further, in that of Peter when accused by Paul of dissimulation,* we have illustrations, he con-

* Galat. ii. 14—13.

tended, of that readiness to bear reproof which ought to temper the haughty bearing of the bishops. "But I am a prelate," he supposes it will be answered. "I am the chief pastor of the flock: I am not to be accused by those who ought to be subject to me, and whom I have to lead. They ought patiently to suffer my failings." To this Damian replies, "It is told us in the gospel, that when our brethren, having been privately admonished, do not amend their faults, we should state them to the church; and this being expressed in general terms, ought to be understood as well of the faults of bishops, as of those of the rest of the faithful. For if the bishops will not submit to the laws of the church, who can be expected to yield obedience?" The venerable reformer concludes by observing, that nothing would more conduce to the abating of the pride of bishops, who valued themselves too much on their divinity; to the maintenance of peace, and the suppression of tyranny, than the custom of allowing inferiors to have recourse to some superior authority, and to synods, that they might there prefer their complaints against their bishops.*

Had the spirit which dictated these sentiments, and others of a corresponding character, been allowed to prevail in the conduct of the proposed reformation, not only would the church of Rome, but the church universal, have been preserved from numberless evils which it has had to endure through successive centuries. But the calm, elevated, self-denying temper of the bishop of Ostia could exercise but little influence in such stormy times. The fiercer as well as bolder disposition of Hildebrand ruled the main current of opinion; and the mild sentiments of

* Ep. xii. lib. 1.

such men as Damian were viewed as rather calculated to obstruct, than to promote the objects of his friends.

On the death of Alexander, the attention of parties was turned with more than ordinary anxiety to the vacant chair. The election of a pontiff, favourable to their views, was eagerly desired by the reformers, as affording the only hope of the triumph of the church. Hildebrand had now long been at the head of affairs. It was well known that his counsels determined the decisions of the court and the conclave: that he ruled the weak by his natural energy; and convinced the able and enlightened by the real worth of his talents. Little effort was required, therefore, to secure his election; and on the very day that Alexander breathed his last, Hildebrand was declared his successor, and assumed the title of Gregory VII. It was necessary, however, to preserve some appearance of respect for the rights of the emperor. A messenger was, therefore, sent to the imperial court, and Henry was desired to confirm the new pope in his suddenly acquired dignity. The emperor expressed his surprise at the precipitate conduct of the cardinals, and instead of granting the confirmation, demanded, dispatched a minister to inquire into the character of the proceeding. But Hildebrand was too well skilled in diplomacy to be alarmed at the arrival of the ambassador. He treated him with the highest consideration; loaded him with presents; and sent him back to his master, fully convinced that the election had been conducted with every regard to the privileges of the German crown.

The history of Gregory's pontificate belongs rather to the annals of states and empires than to those of Christ's church, or people. A very brief outline therefore of the struggles in which he was engaged with the power of the

temporal sovereign, will be sufficient for our present purpose. It was greatly favourable to his designs, that Henry IV. of Germany had early embroiled himself with many nobles of the empire. The first trial of strength made by Gregory began by his directing the new bishop of Lucça not to accept the investiture from Henry, till he had been formally reconciled to the see of Rome. Indignant as Henry must have felt at the haughty conduct of the pontiff, he soon found that it would be necessary to yield or temporize. Gregory, on the other hand, expressed his desire to show affection for the son of the monarch from whom he had received many instances of regard. The bishops of Lombardy had mingled another element of agitation with those supplied by the pope and the emperor. From the time of Saint Ambrose up to that in which the present controversy commenced, the church of Milan had contended for its independence, and adopted a rule of worship and discipline peculiar to itself. In the happier times of Christian communion, the distinction of families, or churches, was not regarded as involving any principle hostile to brotherly love. But the subjection of all to one was now supposed to be necessary to the communion of the several branches of the great Christian family. Gregory adopted this view as an essential part of his system. He described the state of the churches in Lombardy, therefore, as marked by schism and corruption; nor would he meet the advances of Henry towards a reconciliation, but on condition that he employed his authority to subject the archbishop of Milan to the Roman see.

Henry soon discovered that it would require an equal degree of caution and resolution to defend himself against the power of the haughty pontiff. In the measures which

he accordingly took, he was aided by the German prelates, who were no less alarmed for their own dignity and privileges, than was their sovereign for the independence of his crown.

An assembly having been convened at Worms, a considerable number of German bishops united in charging Gregory with such offences against the constitution of the church, that he ought to be forthwith deposed. The substance of their debate, and of the accusations heaped upon the pontiff, was embodied in a letter addressed to him by the archbishops of Mainz and Treves. In this important document they stated, "that he had assumed the pontificate contrary to the rules of the church, but that they had suffered his intrusion, from the expectation that he would atone for his offence against discipline, by his general probity and usefulness: that though our Saviour had recommended peace and charity as the proper marks of the Christian character, he had spread dissension in the church by his novelties, and torn it in pieces by his pride and cruelty: that he had created confusion and trouble among those who had hitherto lived in tranquillity and union, for that he had blown up the flames of discord in all the churches of Italy, Germany, France, and Spain: that he was seeking to deprive the bishops of that power which they received at their ordination, from the Holy Ghost; and had consigned them to the fury of the people, who were taught to reject all, both bishops and priests, who had not obtained their consecration, by an unworthy submission, from his hands." After some further observations of a similar kind, they reminded him that, according to the rule which he himself was mainly instrumental in establishing, he could not be regarded as the legitimate pontiff: that he had induced the synod, held in the

time of Nicholas II., to pass the law, by which it was decreed, that no pope should be acknowledged unless elected by the cardinals, received by the people, and approved by the king: that he had violated the principle thus established; and by his tyranny, and other instances of unworthy conduct, rendered himself amenable to the sentence of deposition, which they now proceeded to pass upon him.

One of the clergy of the church of Parma was appointed to execute the perilous task of conveying this epistle to Rome. He went, attended by the envoys of the emperor, and formally delivered the letter into Gregory's hands. A man of his character was little likely to be moved by vain threats and denunciations. He directed the epistle to be read publicly before the members of his council, and sat patiently while the envoys proclaimed the determination of their master to appear with an army before Rome, and to execute the sentence of deposition by force. But his suppressed wrath only displayed itself the more terribly when the proper moment arrived for its expression. He proved how utterly he despised the attacks of his enemies, by immediately thundering forth anathemas against both the king and the bishops. Excommunicating the former, he absolved his subjects from their allegiance, and proclaimed his deposition through every portion of his dominions.

Gregory had formed a right estimate of the men with whom he was contending. The sentence of excommunication was no sooner published, than the archbishop of Treves hastened with a humbled and trembling spirit, to reconcile himself to the pontiff. His example was quickly followed by the archbishop of Mainz; and these exalted leaders of the movement having thus

yielded to their terrors, few of the remaining bishops had courage to assert their independence. Hence the emperor was left almost alone in the struggle; and it now became an important question who was to strike the first blow in the conflict, in the issue of which so many interests were involved. Gregory had no wish to precipitate measures. It would evidently be better for the success of his main designs, to secure, if possible, the quiet assent of Henry to his demands. To obtain time, therefore, he published a letter, addressed to the bishops, abbots, priests, dukes, princes, knights, and the faithful generally, of the Roman empire; and having stated what he had done in favour of Henry, and how unworthy a return he had received, he exhorted them to employ their utmost influence with the monarch to induce him to confess his errors, and perform those acts of humiliation and penance which might entitle him to the pardon of the church.

To inquiries which were made by some bishops and others, whether a king could be lawfully excommunicated, Gregory replied by citing the instances of the king of France, excommunicated by pope Zachary; of Theodosius, subjected to a similar humiliation by the venerable Ambrose; and by reference to the authority which our blessed Lord bestowed on Saint Peter, who received the power of admitting into, or excluding from, the kingdom of heaven, without respect to the rank or dignity of those concerned. In the letter referred to, he further stated, that he had granted certain bishops the power of absolving such of their brethren, and of the nobles, as would separate themselves from communion with Henry; but that he had forbidden them to grant that prince absolution, till he was assured of his repentance, and

of his willingness to make atonement for his past conduct.

In another letter, addressed to the bishops and nobles of Germany, he solemnly protested, that it was neither pride nor self-interest which had moved him to excommunicate Henry, but a devout regard for the interests of the church. He exhorted them to treat him with tenderness and honour, whenever he gave proofs of sincere repentance, by dismissing from his council those who had been guilty of simony; by his learning to venerate and obey the church, instead of treating her as a servant; and by following henceforth the doctrine of the holy fathers, instead of those customs which were injurious to the interests of truth and holiness. But should this evidence of a change in his disposition be wanting, it would be their duty to prepare for the election of another prince, whose piety and devotion to the holy see might entitle him to the dignity.

This daring attack upon the rights of their sovereign, instead of exciting the indignation of the German princes and bishops, only filled them with alarm and doubt. They convened a meeting in the town of Tribur, on the Rhine. Most of the high dignitaries of the empire were present on the occasion; and two legates of the pope appeared in the assembly, prepared to urge upon it the duty of immediately declaring the throne vacant.

King Henry now felt that his situation was more perilous than he had originally supposed. The principal nobles of the empire; the greater number of the bishops and clergy, were devoted to the interests of the pope; and the excommunication, which he had at first treated with haughty contempt and retaliation, now seemed to him like the voice of some mighty and revengeful spirit, ready

to chase him from his kingdom. No time was to be lost. A diet was about to assemble at Augsburg. He knew that the triumph of his enemies would there be complete. Inspired alike by resolution and despair, he determined instantly to pass the Alps. Afraid to trust his secret with those about him, and destitute of the means of supporting a retinue, he set out, accompanied only by his queen, and a single affectionate follower. It was winter, and the roads were covered with a deep snow. On reaching Savoy, his mother-in-law, the margravine of Susa, supplied him with some few attendants; but the most difficult part of the journey still remained. The passes of the Alps exhibited all the horrors of the season. Henry's fears were greatly increased by the hardships to which his consort was exposed. Her courage, however, was equal to the occasion. Protected from the blast by an ox-hide wrapped closely round her, she was conveyed on a sledge down the frozen sides of Mount Cenis.

After enduring many privations, the royal travellers at length reached the plains of Italy. Henry felt that the experiment which he had made, might involve him in greater distresses than those which he had left behind. But, to his inexpressible joy, he found the people of Italy ready to hail him as a deliverer. "The emperor is at hand!" they exclaimed. "He is coming to humble the pride of the pope by the rightful power of the sword!" For the moment, Henry experienced the struggle of two very different sentiments in his heart. On the one side, he was urged to take advantage of the feeling existing in his favour, and to reassume the air of defiance; on the other, he was bowed down with a sense of the long, wearisome season of uncertain strife, through which he

would have to pass, should he again attempt to resist the tremendous power now possessed by Gregory.

Yielding to the latter feeling, he hastened to obtain an interview with the countess Matilda, who ruled with sovereign authority over the rich provinces of Lombardy and Tuscany. Her husband, Gozelo, duke of Lower Lorraine, was devoted to the interests of the empire; while she, intensely impressed with the religious sentiments of the age, as enthusiastically embraced the cause of the church. This had induced them to live apart, each employing the resources of the territories, enjoyed by descent, to favour the adopted party. Matilda proved herself an ardent and untiring friend of Hildebrand. She assisted him with her wealth and influence through the most difficult periods of his career. Willing also to exercise her ability for the pacifying of disputes, she listened to the representations of Henry, and consented to act as mediator between him and the pope. But Gregory would not hear of a compromise. Though the intelligence of Henry's arrival had induced him to seek safety in Matilda's strong castle of Canossa, he refused to listen to any offers of reconciliation, unless founded on the principles for which he had contended from the first, and the subjection of the state to the church. To the diet which was about to assemble, he referred the decision of the quarrel. He was well aware that Henry would gain nothing from such an arbitrator; and he equally well understood that the perplexed monarch dare not await its sentence. Allowing himself, at length, to be moved by the entreaties of the princess, Gregory consented to admit Henry to an interview. But he yielded thus far with every appearance of unwillingness; and the proofs of humility and submission which he demanded of the king, seem to have

been suggested by feelings as little consistent with what might have been looked for in so great a man as Gregory, as with the common maxims of Christian charity.

Rarely, in the fiercest conflict of antagonist principles, has ever an incident occurred more remarkable than that of which we are now speaking. Viewed as ordinarily, it arose from the direct collision of two great systems, each striving for the mastery, and represented, at the moment, by its ordained minister. But it may reasonably be questioned whether it was not merely a struggle between two men, individually seeking to support their authority, and only so far contending for principles, as they were necessarily involved in their desire for supremacy.

However this may be, the chief of the German empire condescended to acknowledge himself defeated in the present trial of strength with the Roman pontiff. Submissively obedient to the directions which he had received, he appeared at the gate of the castle of Canossa, barefooted, and clad in a hair-shirt, and in the other garments of a penitent. The gate was opened to him; but his few attendants were commanded to continue outside the walls. He had no sooner entered the court of the castle than the gate behind him was closed; while he in vain looked for admission into the interior of the building. It was the depth of winter; but for three days and three nights had the monarch to lodge on the bare ground, his feet naked, and the rest of his person only protected from the cold by the slight garb of his humiliating penitence. Gregory appears to have been the only spectator of the king's pain and anxiety who did not feel some pity for his distress. Matilda confessed her sympathy for him by floods of tears; and the other inmates of the castle could not refrain from whispering their execrations

against Gregory's conduct in words not to be misunderstood.

At length, that is on the fourth day after his entrance into the court of the castle, the king was admitted to an interview with the haughty pontiff. His firmness had not been improved by the sufferings which he had just experienced. He submitted, therefore, without remonstrance to the conditions offered by the pope. Absolution was accordingly granted him; but not till he had consented to own the justice of any sentence which should afterwards be passed upon him, and to lay aside all the emblems of his power and royalty.

The dispute between the temporal and spiritual sovereigns originated in a question of privilege. It had been the custom from the earliest times of feudalism for the prince, who bestowed a fief on any of his nobles, to present him with a banner in token of the relation between them. As the great bishops and abbots were enriched with large temporal possessions, and had corresponding obligations to the sovereign, investiture was no less necessary in their case than in that of the military chief. Instead, however, of the banner, a ring and a shepherd's crook were the emblems employed; and this form of investiture had been universally adopted in the admission of bishops to their temporal rights and possessions. But Gregory regarded this custom as injurious to the dignity, or freedom of the church. He thus confounded together two very different things. The independence of the clergy as teachers of divine truth, and their independence as members of the state, or as holding authority and property at its hands, are to be regarded according to their origin. No earthly power can deny to the united members of Christ, as constituting his church, the right of

preaching his word, and doing that which may properly conduce to the establishment of his kingdom. He has invested them with the authority necessary to accomplish this purpose; and the world cannot interfere with their independence, in this respect, without doing dishonour to Christ himself. But when the ministers of the church avail themselves of the favour of princes, of the good intentions of Christian states and societies, and receive endowments, they are bound to recollect that, though their spiritual independence remains the same, their relation to the world is altogether changed. Property must ever involve certain temporal duties, certain obligations, upon the fulfilment of which the state must insist, unless it be willing to suffer derangement and ruin. When Gregory, therefore, prohibited the bishops from receiving investiture at the hands of the sovereign, he ought to have been prepared to make a sacrifice of the wealth which originally rendered that investiture necessary. But he wished to break the bond between the church and the world, retaining what the world had given. He was demanding the restoration of an independence which had been sold for a price, with no intention whatever of giving back what had been paid. In this respect the proceedings of the pontiff wore, from the beginning, a doubtful appearance. His pride, his angry temper, the worst elements of his character, were nurtured by the nature of the conflict in which he thus became engaged. We see him when only contending against simony, exercising a courage and displaying an enthusiasm, well deserving admiration. Few passages in history are more interesting than that in which his conduct is recorded, when called upon to examine a French bishop on the charge of simony. Hildebrand was then chancellor, and acted as the representa-

tive of the pope. On the day appointed for the trial, he ascended the tribunal, and prepared to question the accused prelate. "But where are my accusers?" exclaimed the bishop, who had largely bribed the authors of the charge not to appear against him. "Let them now come forth, if they have aught to say!" No one answered. Hildebrand then addressing himself, with a solemn voice and a stern look, to the bishop, said, "Dost thou believe that the Holy Ghost, with the Father and the Son, are one God?" "I believe it," was the reply. Hildebrand then commanded him to repeat the words, "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and while the bishop was uttering this sentence, he regarded him with such fixed attention, that, terrified by the inquisitive glance of the judge, and still more by the terrors of his own conscience, he hesitated at the last words, and could not pronounce them. Overwhelmed with confusion, he fell at Hildebrand's feet; acknowledged his offence, and resigned his dignity. Having performed this act of penitence, he was able, says the narrative, to repeat clearly the solemn words which before would not pass his lips. What was still more important, several other bishops, and twenty clergymen of inferior rank, becoming acquainted with what had taken place, confessed their simoniacal practices, and resigned the offices which they had purchased.

But the feeling which dictated this proceeding, was overborne at a later period, by the angry passions generated in a strife for a very different object. We have seen the result of the interview between Gregory and Henry. The latter had subjected himself to the most insulting treatment. He left the castle of Canossa with the benediction of the pope, but with a mind ill at ease,

The reception which awaited him among his former adherents realized all the dark forebodings of his heart. They were indignant at the course which he had pursued. The joy which they had felt on his arrival in Italy, was changed into the bitterest vexation. They had expected to find in him a devoted champion of those interests which they saw endangered by the ambition, or the stern morality, of Gregory. Instead of seeing these hopes realized, they beheld their expected leader prostrate at the feet of the pope; and when they believed the moment arrived for their avenging themselves on the man who had so grievously insulted them, they learnt that their sovereign himself had legitimized any act of tyranny which their common enemy might choose to perpetrate.

Such was the indignation with which Henry's conduct had inspired most of the Italian, and some of the German, nobles, that it was seriously debated among them, whether it would not be proper at once to depose a monarch who had shown himself so little capable of defending either his own interests, or those of his subjects. The remonstrances, and manifestations of anger, and even of contempt, with which Henry was saluted wherever he went, bitterly afflicted him. It was in vain that he endeavoured to defend his conduct on the plea of necessity. Nothing, it was urged, ought to have induced a monarch so to humble himself before an ecclesiastic, whose claims to homage were of the most doubtful character.

Thus assailed, Henry saw that he must either finally submit to the most extravagant demands of the pope, or at once take up arms, and make one desperate struggle for liberty. Feelings of private resentment, as well as the clamours of the nobles who were friendly to his crown, pressed him to the latter course. He knew how

dangerous it would be to hesitate; and in a few weeks, the monarch who had watched three days and nights, barefoot, and bareheaded at the windows of the pope's apartments, and who, kneeling before him had given his kingdom into his hands, was marching at the head of an army, ready to level, if necessary, Rome itself with the ground.

Henry's conduct from this time was as bold and politic as it had before seemed weak, and unworthy of his station. At the first outbreak of his quarrel with Gregory, they had addressed each other in the language of contemptuous but impotent fury. "The world," said Gregory, "is guided by two lights: by the sun, the larger, and the moon, the lesser, light. Thus the apostolic power represents the sun, and the royal power the moon; for as the latter derives its light from the former, so do emperors, kings, and princes, receive their authority through the pope, while he receives his authority from God. Therefore, the power of the Roman chair is greater than the power of the throne; and the king is subject to the pope, and must obey him. If the apostles in heaven can bind and loose, so may they also upon earth give, or take away, according to men's merit, empires, kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, and every other kind of possession. If they be appointed as sovereign judges in spiritual matters, much more must they be entitled to judge in temporal affairs; and if, lastly, they have a right to command angels, so highly exalted above the most powerful of monarchs, how much more entitled must they not be to pronounce sentence upon the miserable slaves of those angels? The pope is the successor of the apostles, and their representative upon the chair of Saint Peter. He is the vicar of Christ, and, therefore, above all."

Such was the language employed by Gregory, at the commencement of his conflict with Henry, whom he denounced as no king, because he dared to question the right of the Roman pontiff to the control of his actions as a sovereign. The tone in which Henry replied is further illustrative of the undignified character of the controversy. "Henry, king, not by force, but by the sacred ordination of God, to Hildebrand, not the pope, but the false monk. This greeting hast thou merited by the confusion which thou hast spread among all classes of the church. Thou hast trampled under foot its holy ministers, as slaves who know not what their lord doeth; and by that desecration, hast won favour from the lips of the multitude. We have long suffered this, because we have desired to maintain the honour of the Roman chair. But thou hast mistaken our forbearance for fear, and hast been emboldened to exalt thyself above the royal power, bestowed upon us by God himself, and hast threatened to deprive us of our authority, as if we had received it at thy hands. Thou hast raised thyself upon the steps of cunning and deceit, which are accursed. Thou hast gained favour by gold; won power by favour; and by that power thou hast gained the chair of peace, from whence thou hast banished peace itself, by arming the inferior against the superior. Saint Peter, the true pope, says, 'Fear God, and honour the king;' but as thou dost not fear God, so thou dost not honour me, his ambassador. Descend, therefore, thou that liest under a curse of excommunication, by our judgment, and by that of all our bishops. Descend: quit the apostolic seat which thou hast usurped! Then shall the chair of Saint Peter be ascended by one who will not make the divine word a cloak for his arrogance. I, Henry, by the grace of

God, king, and all our bishops, say to thee, 'Descend! descend!'"

But it was not by threatening words that the struggle was now to be carried on. Henry's spirit rose with the difficulties of his position. The party in Germany which had never viewed him with a favourable eye, took advantage of the pope's sentence upon their monarch, and elected another emperor, Rudolphus, duke of Swabia. A sanguinary war was the consequence. The Saxons ardently espoused the cause of Rudolphus; and by their help, he was enabled to sustain his usurped dignity during three years of constant hostilities. Gregory appears to have viewed the conflict with the cold and cruel heart of a politician. He occasionally sent his legates to mediate between the rival hosts, but with no earnest intention to exercise his power in restoring peace. "The pope's legates," says the old historian,* "arrived, and went to each camp, promising the favour of his holiness at one moment to the Saxons, and at another to Henry; while, according to Roman custom, they spoiled both armies of as much gold as they could obtain." The Saxons were especially indignant at Gregory's conduct. "Misfortunes, such as those which we have had to endure, would never have arisen," they said in one of their letters to him, "or they would have been comparatively trivial, had you, having once commenced your course, turned neither to the right hand nor the left. By obeying our shepherd, we have exposed ourselves to the rapacity of the wolf; and if we be now abandoned by that shepherd, no people in the world can be so wretched as we shall be."

Gregory paid no attention to these reproaches; but

* Bruno in Kohloransch.

when, after a bloody encounter between the two armies, near Mülhausen, victory declared in favour of Rudolphus, he at length sent him the imperial crown, and once more pronounced an anathema against Henry. The latter, however, was not now to be bowed down either by threats or misfortunes. He summoned his adherents around him; held a council at Brixen, in the Tyrol, and having pronounced sentence of excommunication upon Gregory, elected Wibert, archbishop of Ravenna, pope.*

Another desperate battle was fought soon after, between the rival forces, on the banks of the Elster, in Saxony. Henry appeared to be again on the point of losing the day; but just as his army was about to leave the field, Rudolphus received a mortal wound, and Henry gained a victory which promised to secure him still further triumphs over his enemies. Resolved to pursue the advantage which he enjoyed in the unexpected discomfiture of Gregory's allies, he led his forces directly into Italy, and soon appeared before the walls of Rome. During three successive years was the venerable city exposed to the attacks of the besieging army. So little did the Romans themselves sympathise with Gregory in this season of distress, that he was obliged to retreat to the castle of Saint Angelo, and there defend himself against their rage. But surrounded as he was by enemies, he scornfully rejected Henry's offer of peace. He would hold no communion with him, he replied, but on condition that he gave satisfaction to God and the church. Finding all hopes of reconciliation vain, Henry and his queen received the imperial crown from Clement III., in 1084, and almost immediately after withdrew his forces

* Wibert assumed the title of Clement III.

from Italy. Gregory, in the meantime, was delivered from his perilous position by the chivalrous Robert Guiscard, duke of Normandy, who had made himself master of the richest provinces of Lower Italy. But his deliverance was purchased at the expense of Rome, and its inhabitants. The barbarian troops, once admitted into the city, revelled with unrestrained licentiousness on the spoils which it offered. Pillage and massacre marked their steps; and some of the most precious memorials of past renown which had been spared for ages, were swept away in the conflagration which they kindled. Gregory was conveyed to Salerno, where he enjoyed, under the protection of Robert Guiscard, the homage of those who still regarded him, notwithstanding the distresses which his violence had created, as the consecrated champion of religion and the church. He lived only a year after his arrival at Salerno; but his spirit was unsubdued to the last. It is said by some authors, that he regretted that part of his conduct which had led to so long and disastrous a strife. But others record that when asked, in his dying moments, to pardon and bless those whom he had excommunicated, he replied, "Excepting the pretended king Henry, the anti-pope, and their adherents, I absolve and bless all those who believe I have the power to do so;" an answer which, if really his, exhibits him the same in death as in life, implacable and uncompromising; viewing one object alone as essential to the safety of the church, and ready to risk all things for its attainment. The vices of his character are glaringly manifest; but they merit a very different judgment according to the degree of selfishness with which we suppose them to have been combined. If he strove to humble princes, that his own grandeur might be the more conspi-

cuous; or sought to render nations tributary, that he might expend their gold on his own enjoyments and luxuries, he merited the reprobation so profusely heaped upon his head; but if his conduct was the error of a great mind, forgetting all selfish thoughts in one grand public design, then, however much we may abhor the tyranny with which his proceedings were combined, we must view the man himself in a far more favourable light, and pass a much more indulgent sentence upon his actions.

A new spirit was infused into the Western church by the enactments of Gregory VII. Gross licentiousness had long prevailed among the clergy. The mode which he adopted for the cure of the evil was characteristic of a stern, impetuous mind, resolved to accomplish by force, what might have been far better attained by the milder instruments of moral reform. To separate the clergy from the world, he resolved to prohibit their marriage. This design was opposed, at first, with as much determination on the part of the church, as his plan for humbling the temporal power, was resisted by the princes against whom it was directed. Even in the synods which were assembled to confirm the will of the pontiff, the feeling was often strongly expressed against its general tendency. The clergy of France and Germany were loud in their clamours when called upon to renounce their wives, or their benefices. Many took the latter course; but others soon set the example of showing how easy it is, when tyranny fastens its yoke upon human feeling and the proper sympathies of nature, to evade its force by deceit and fraud.

But Gregory paid no heed either to the remonstrances of the clergy, or to the warning which the abuses arising

from his measures early gave him. He pursued his course with unhesitating determination; trampling underfoot whatever lay in his path; and resolving to accomplish his purpose, however many, or however great, the particular injuries which might be involved in its execution.

CHAPTER XXV.

STATE OF THE CHURCH AT THE DEATH OF GREGORY VII.—
HIS SUCCESSORS.—URBAN II.—THE CRUSADES—THEIR
ORIGIN AND PROGRESS—GENERAL RESULTS.

A.D.
1106. THE state of the church at the death of Gregory VII. was doubtful and alarming. Rome had gained an ascendancy in the government of ecclesiastical affairs, which rendered her views and policy the rule of Christendom. What the pope did, the bishops would imitate; what was determined in a synod at Rome must, sooner or later, modify the principles and practice of churches in all the countries of Europe. The success which Henry had gained seemed little favourable to the fulfilment of the designs for which Gregory had so long contended, and finally sacrificed the repose of his old age, and all the honours of his station. His adherents elected another pope immediately after his decease; but they could not secure him the enjoyment of the dignity; and Henry had the satisfaction of seeing Clement III. acknowledged by a considerable party as the legitimate pontiff. This triumph on the part of the sovereign who stood in most direct hostility to Rome, threatened to involve it in a further struggle with the civil power, not only in Germany, but in other nations. The princes of France and England, seeing the success of Henry, could

not fail to be encouraged in opposing the progress of a system which they had a common reason to dread. William the Conqueror exhibited, in a singular degree, the wisdom and energy of his government, by resisting, without harm to himself, or his kingdom, the extravagant demands of Hildebrand.

But while the powers of the two antagonists seemed thus, for the time, almost equally balanced, society and religion were suffering grievous harm. Clement, who had contrived to support himself on the papal throne while Gregory's party was agitated by the loss of its leader, could not separate from his name the ignominious title of anti-pope. Urban II. was at length placed in the secure possession of the dignity. Clement in vain looked for the aid of the emperor. That monarch, after a brief season of prosperity, saw all his hopes of peace and happiness vanish. The spirit of Hildebrand seemed to be still hovering on his path, and inspiring all around him with its hatred to his person. Instigated by Urban, his son Conrad rose in rebellion against him. The untimely death of that prince did not save him from the affliction of a war with his own offspring. His second son, Henry, declared, that he could not continue in communion with him while lying under the sentence of excommunication, as repeated by Urban. The unhappy monarch, bowed down with care and grief, might feel that the sins of his early days were now receiving their meet, but terrible chastisement. He listened to the first overtures of reconciliation with his son, and condescended to appeal to the diet, about to assemble at Mainz, to determine who, the father or the son, had a right to the imperial crown? The basest ambition that can corrupt the human breast prevailed over the wretched prince. He pretended to la-

ment the grief which he had caused his father. With an apparently humbled feeling, he proposed to accompany him on his journey to Mainz. The emperor readily agreed to the arrangement. They joined each other at Coblenz; but shortly before they reached the town of Bingen, between Coblenz and Mainz, the prince drew off the guard attending his father, and falling upon him with his own servants placed him under arrest. It was in vain that the captive emperor besought the aid of the prelates who visited him in his prison. They assisted in stripping him of his regal ornaments. He was compelled to abdicate in favour of his rebellious son; and when he entreated the bishop of Spiers to grant him some quiet corner of consecrated ground on which he might rest at last, the angry dignitary replied, that he could bestow no favour upon one who had exposed himself to the excommunication of the Roman pontiff. The duke of Lorraine nobly espoused the cause of the broken-hearted sovereign, who soon after died in the asylum provided for him at Liege by Otbert, the bishop of that city, his old and faithful friend.

It might have been supposed that Henry V., indebted as he was for the success of his early ambition to the popes, would have willingly sacrificed some portion of his prerogative to their claims. But he was no sooner seated on the throne, than he proved himself as resolute an opponent to the ambitious demands of Rome as his father. There is something even approaching to the ludicrous in the discussion which took place between him and the pope on the subject of investiture. Notwithstanding the complaints made to him, he continued to bestow the ring and the staff on the bishops of his dominions, as if no question had ever been raised as to the right of the sovereign to give them. When urged to cease from this prac-

tice, he replied that it was founded upon the prerogative of his ancestors, enjoyed for three hundred years, and under sixty-three successive popes. But the pontiff returned this startling answer to the most forcible of the arguments which he employed in support of the disputed right: "As he rested his claims," said the pope, "upon the donations which the emperors had granted to the church, he might take back all the cities, duchies, counties, coins, tolls, farms, and castles so bestowed, the church retaining only the presents of private individuals, and the tithes and offerings. For it is considered," he added, "both by the divine law, and by the law of the church, that the clergy shall not occupy themselves with temporal matters, nor even appear at court, except when engaged in some effort to save the oppressed. But among you in Germany," he further added, "the bishops and abbots are so mixed up with worldly affairs, that the servants of the altar are become the servants of the court."

Whatever might be the real intentions of the pope himself, it seems to have been well understood, that the clergy who held richly-endowed benefices, would never agree to a plan which would deprive them at one blow of the greater part of their revenues. Henry was aware of this; and, therefore, accepted the pontiff's proposal with perfect confidence that he would not be risking thereby any of his prerogatives. "Let the bishops," he said, "restore the estates which they have received from the crown, since the time of Charlemagne, and we will dispense with the ceremony of investiture." This was regarded as a sufficient foundation for further arrangements. The emperor proceeded to Rome. The subject was discussed in a solemn assembly of bishops and nobles. After a long

dispute, one of the German knights started up, and exclaimed, "Why is this wrangling? You know that our lord, the emperor, is resolved to be crowned as were Charlemagne, Louis, and the other emperors of former times." However startled by the bold demeanour of the warrior, Pascal replied, "that he could not perform the ceremony of the coronation before king Henry had solemnly sworn to discontinue the right of investiture." No sooner had this statement fallen from the mouth of the pope, than Henry, following the advice of his chancellor, Adalbert, and Burchard, bishop of Munster, called in his guards, and made the pope and the cardinals prisoners.

The Roman people were justly indignant at this proceeding; and, summoning their whole strength, rushed furiously upon the Germans, who had formed an encampment round St. Peter's. Henry, mounting his horse, met the enraged multitude, and slew five Romans with his own lance. This served further to madden the crowd. He was attacked, wounded, and thrown from his horse. Another moment, and he would have been trampled under foot; but count Otho came to his rescue, and for his loyalty was cut to pieces by the infuriated people. For sixty days, the pope remained a prisoner in the church of Saint Peter. During the whole of that time the city, and the surrounding neighbourhood, continued to endure all the horrors of warfare. At length, the pontiff was induced to yield; and a treaty was drawn up, by which the emperor was to retain the right of investing the bishops with the ring and staff. The treaty having been signed, Pascal crowned the monarch with all the ancient ceremonials; and thus, for a while, peace was established between the church and the state.

The church, at this period, exhibited the most remark-

able conflict of opposing principles. On the one side, there was the desire to uphold long-established customs, originating with ecclesiastical ambition, and fostered by the superstition of a dark age; and, on the other, there was the natural thirst for knowledge, the passion for liberty, the yearning of the spirit of universal man after what is true and great, and must ever remain so, amid all the changes to which the material forms of society are necessarily subject.

An idea had now gained fast hold of the minds of many, that the right of directing the religious concerns of the world might be acquired by a formal investiture. This has been the most fatal practical error ever introduced into the church. We still feel its effects. Reformation and revolution have failed to destroy its influence; and we must not hope to see it expelled till the power of the gospel shall have become recognised as the only actual means of regeneration or conversion. Gregory VII. had really desired to exalt the character and enlarge the boundaries of his church, for the church's sake. His vices were tempered by a certain degree of generosity. He never excited contempt. But it was far otherwise with many of the pontiffs who laboured no less resolutely than Gregory for the advancement of ecclesiastical domination. They were mean and sensual, as well as tyrannical; and they thirsted for power only that they might expend its gains upon themselves. To the unholy ambition of such men as these may be attributed the schism which so long disturbed the Roman church, and with it the other churches of the West.

But amid all the deplorable consequences resulting from the general state of society, and the vices of the clergy, striking proofs were about to be given, that the

living spirit which often seems to animate the souls of multitudes, and urge them to acts of supernatural devotion, was now ready to display its power. The Crusades would never have taken place had there not been a sincere and intense feeling of religion in the great mass of mankind. However unfavourable the state of the church to its rightful performance of any of the grand ministerial offices with which it was intrusted, the gospel, in its own superior strength and grandeur, had left impressions on society, had so wrought upon the common affections of mankind, that they were prepared at the first signal given, to engage in any project, which had only the appearance even of conducing to the power of the Redeemer.

The conquest of Palestine by the infidels had ever been viewed in Christendom as one of the greatest calamities of a degenerate age. But it was not merely in the light of an event, distressing to devout feeling, that the triumph of the Saracens was regarded. Positive evils arose therefrom ; distresses which, considering the disposition of the times, were no less to be lamented than the common misfortunes which belong to the loss of territory when, by its subjugation, kindred and friends are reduced to bondage. Many of the holiest men in all parts of the world regarded a pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a becoming proof of their zeal. However erroneous the notion, it was one which generally led them to sacrifice every personal consideration to the fulfilment of the supposed duty ; and when they set out upon their long and perilous journey, they were followed by the affectionate sympathies, not only of their own immediate friends, but by those of the whole community in which they lived.

It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that the tidings

which were brought respecting the cruel treatment endured by the Christians in Palestine, should inflame the people of Europe with indignation. The sufferers were united to them by the closest ties of religious communion. They were their brothers and fathers; and the barbarities to which they were exposed, when worshipping at the tomb of the Saviour, awoke a thrill of agony in thousands of sensitive hearts. This was well known to the clergy; and in addition to the natural feeling of sympathy which they indulged in common with the people, there was the more questionable sentiment of offended pride; the desire of avenging the insults inflicted on the Christian name, and meeting the scoffs of the infidel with fire and sword. With the Roman pontiff, and many of the princes of the West, there was another, and very powerful motive for listening to every suggestion of this kind. The advance of the Saracens threatened Europe itself; and the terrified imagination of these potentates sometimes brought to their minds the picture of the church, with all its gorgeous sanctuaries and altars, becoming, like the holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, a prey to Mohamedan despotism.

Sylvester II. was the first pontiff who entertained any serious idea of sending a Christian army into Palestine. The good sense and piety of this pope would probably have led him to form a plan more in accordance with the practical nature of the undertaking, than that subsequently adopted. But the pressing necessities of his own position, and the short duration of his pontificate, prohibited his carrying any part of his design into effect. Nothing would have agreed better with the fiery spirit of Hildebrand, than a holy war; and had he not been engaged in his unhappy struggles with the German princes, he would have found in the fields of Palestine, and amid

the memorials of divine love, and primitive faith, many occasions for the exercise of his natural enthusiasm.

Such, however, were the perplexities in which his contest with Henry involved him, that he could take no step towards opposing the growth of the infidel dominion.* It was, therefore, reserved for Urban II. to accomplish a project which both the tendencies of the age, and the common interests of Europe, seemed to invest with the noblest character. Urban himself had to contend with an anti-pope; and was obliged to satisfy himself with a residence far from the city, to the apostolic glories of which the papacy owed its highest renown. But, forming a court in the town of Clermont, he was surrounded by cardinals and bishops devoted to his interests, and caring little, such was the degenerate feeling of these churchmen, that they could no longer tread the soil, which had been consecrated by the blood of martyred apostles. Enraged against Philip II., king of France, on account of the opposition which that monarch offered to his decrees, he placed his kingdom under an interdict; and while thus at open war with the sovereign, whose dominions afforded him a refuge, he summoned the great council of Clermont, by the aid of which he proposed to accomplish the design of a crusade.

An important help had been already rendered him by the presence of Peter the Hermit, the far-famed pilgrim, who after having witnessed the sufferings of his brethren in Palestine, returned to excite in others the feelings by which he himself was moved. This remarkable man had traversed the greater part of Europe, and had visited the courts of its princes and nobles, proclaiming aloud the

* Baronius, An. 1095, n. xxxiv.

object of his mission. His pilgrim's garb; his countenance, expressive of mingled grief, passion, and devotion; the crucifix which he bore in his hand; all tended to give force to the solemn words with which he described the afflictions of believers worshipping in the holy city.

At the moment when the excitement, created by the preaching of Peter, had reached its height, ambassadors arrived from the Greek emperor Alexis Comnenus. They told the pope how Constantinople was threatened by the approach of the Turks; and they implored him to send such military succours as might be most readily collected. Thus prepared, Urban opened the council of Clermont with a degree of splendour well calculated to awe the minds of the vast multitudes which assembled to behold its proceedings. Greatly to his praise, he availed himself of the temper in which he found both the people and the nobility, to introduce some subjects to the council, which regarded not so much the present design, as the general interests of humanity. Thus, having passed new decrees in support of ecclesiastical discipline, he represented to the assembled princes and warriors, the unholy character of those private feuds, in which it was their custom to engage. The church had often exercised its salutary influence in correcting the sanguinary spirit of the age. Several councils had interdicted the pursuit of private vengeance, during certain days of the week; and, however imperfect such a mode of restraint may now seem, it certainly tended, in many cases, to stem for a time the course of those fiery passions which, but for this interference of the church, would have involved society in utter ruin. The truce of God, as it was called, was first proclaimed in Aquitaine, in the year 1032. But such proclamations were often regarded by the haughty nobles

whom they concerned, with great indignation; and it required all the power which the church could derive from its anathemas, to secure even a partial obedience to these its salutary enactments.

Urban now succeeded in obtaining a formal renewal of the "Truce of God," and the thunders of the church were levelled against all who should refuse to become obedient to the laws of peace and justice. By another decree of the council, widows and orphans, merchants and labourers, were put under the safeguard of religion. Wherever the cross was planted, there the weak and the wretched were to find an asylum safe as the strongest fortress, and sacred as the most sumptuous church.

It was in the tenth session of the council, that the main subject for which it had been convened was formally announced. Peter the Hermit first addressed the assembled multitude. His pathetic narratives were listened to with breathless attention; and thousands stood ready to obey his call, before a word had fallen from the lips of Urban. But when the pontiff detailed the long series of events by which the holy land had been brought into its present state of desolation; when he appealed to the sacred testimony of Scripture* in support of his argument, and intimated, that the choicest blessings of Heaven would be poured upon those who responded to the sighs of Jerusalem in her low and captive state,—the

* "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." This may be taken as an example of the mode of citing Scripture adopted by Urban. When looking at the soldiers who were mingled with the crowd, he exclaimed, "You who once were the terror of your fellow-citizens; and who have bartered your strength to the fury of others for a vile stipend, now, armed with the glaive of the Maccabees, hasten to defend the house of Israel, which is the vine of the Lord of Hosts."

enthusiasm of his hearers could no longer be restrained ; it burst forth in one loud, simultaneous expression, *Dieu le veut ! Dieu le veut !* "It is the will of God ! It is the will of God !"

The result answered the expectations formed from this commencement of the design. A vast body of noblemen, of experienced warriors, of the clergy, and of the common people of every degree, assumed the badge of the cross in token of their readiness to join the first expedition to the holy land. Such was the excitement which everywhere prevailed, that the French, it is said, seemed to have no country but the holy land. They sacrificed their estates, and were equally ready to sacrifice their lives to accomplish the deliverance of Jerusalem. Italy, Germany, and England exhibited the same enthusiasm ; and the whole framework of European society appeared to be shattered by the convulsive movement to which it was thus exposed.

Early in the spring of the year 1096, a miscellaneous multitude of men and women, to the number of sixty thousand, began their journey towards the East. They were impelled by a wild enthusiasm ; and madly believed that the hermit Peter would be to them a better leader than the brave and experienced generals who were still busied about their warlike preparations. Near twenty thousand German peasants, led by a monk, followed in the track of Peter ; and near two hundred thousand people, obeying only their own wild passions, or desire of adventure, are said to have soon after taken the same road. Vast throngs of these unhappy creatures perished before they came near the borders of the East ; and it is computed that, on the whole, three hundred thousand people fell victims to their desire to anticipate the regular movement of the crusaders.

Godfrey of Bouillon was the warrior appointed to lead this splendid armament, now ready to depart for the conquest of Palestine. He was a nobleman of the highest rank; an experienced soldier and a devout Christian. The force placed under his command consisted of eighty thousand foot, and ten thousand horse, embodying the flower of European chivalry. Robert, duke of Normandy, the eldest son of William the Conqueror; the duke of Lorraine; Hugh, count of Vermandois; Eustace and Baldwin, the brothers of Godfrey, took their part in the expedition. Others of similar renown were appointed to various commands in the army, consisting as it did for the most part of the vassals of the great barons whose piety led them to assume the cross.

The arrival of the crusaders in the neighbourhood of Constantinople alarmed Alexis Comnenus, who had but ill calculated the power which religious enthusiasm was now exercising in the West. He would rather have remained exposed to the chances of an attack from the Turks or Saracens, than find his dominions overrun by the countless hordes which seemed to be pouring down like a torrent upon them. A new and a strange intercourse was thus commenced between the East and West. The consequences were of vast importance to the church and the interests of religion. Opportunities were afforded for inquiry, and for the extension of those multiplied relations between different members of the great human family, with the existence of which, however made known, it is good for mankind to be acquainted. The crusades, like all wars, were evil in themselves; but God made them tributary to important purposes of good.

Nicaea, the capital of the Turkish sultan, was the first conquest of the crusaders. Successive triumphs marked

their progress. The principality of Edessa was formed in the course of their march towards Jerusalem. Antioch opened its gates to them, after a desperate conflict, in which military prowess and religious enthusiasm, were equally conspicuous. At length the crusaders reached the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It was assaulted and taken;* and thus, after it had been for near five hundred years subject to the disciples of the false prophet, it was again the possession of a people, who, whatever their errors or their vices, believed, with a faith too passionate to be mixed with doubt, and with a love so sincere that it was prepared for any suffering, the whole volume of history which had sealed Jerusalem with the title of holy.

The results of the first crusade were seen in the growing interest which the people, from one end of Europe to

* July, A. D. 1099. The overwhelming delight which the crusaders felt on catching the first view of Jerusalem, gave some augury of their success. Their feelings are thus described in an old Latin writer. "*Jerusalem verò nominari audientes, omnes præ lætitia in fletum lacrymarum fluxerunt: eo quod tam vicini essent loco sancto desideratæ urbis, pro quo tot labores, tot pericula, tot mortis genera perpassi sunt. Mox pro auditæ urbis desiderio et amore videndi sanctam civitatem, oblitæ laborem suamque fatigationem, amplius quam solebant, iter matueant.*"—*Alb. Aq. lib. v. c. 45.* Michaud *Preces Inst. t. i. p. 636.*

"*Omnes visâ Jerusalem subsisterunt et adoraverunt; et flexo poplite terram sanctam deosculati sunt. Omnes nudis pedibus ambularent, nisi metus hostilis eos armatos incedere debere præciperet. Ibant et flebant; et qui orandi gratiâ convenerant, pugnaturi prius properis anima deferebant. Fleverunt igitur super illam, super quam et Christus illorum flevit, et mirum in modum super quam flebant, fieriâ tertiâ octavo idûs junii obsederunt, obsederunt, inquam, non tanquam novercam privigni, sed quasi matrem filii.*"—*Bald. lib. iv. ap. Bong. p. 130. lb*

another, continued to feel in the state of Palestine. It was the country in which their religion had its birth; and the veneration which they entertained for it, was a good index of the general state of their religious dispositions. But our attention must now be turned to other matters.

A. D.
1112. The treaty between Pascal and the emperor was followed, we have seen, by a brief season of tranquillity. But the Italian bishops did not attempt to conceal their anger at the part taken by the pope. They complained of his conduct as a betrayal of the rights of the church, and it soon became evident that he would be unable to support his position, unless something were done to appease the rising storm. Anxious for peace, Pascal resolved upon holding a council at Rome. It assembled in the church of the Lateran. There were present about a hundred prelates, many of them of the highest rank. On the fifth day, the pope entered upon a full statement of the reasons which had induced him to crown the emperor, and give up the right of investiture. The safety of the church, the homes and the lives of the people, seemed to demand it of him. "I have sworn," he added, "never again to disquiet the king on this subject, or to pronounce an anathema against him. He has badly observed his part of the treaty, but I will not violate my promise. Let God be the judge of his proceedings. But with regard to the writing which I signed by constraint, and without the consent of my brethren, I confess that, in this, I acted not right, and I submit myself to the judgment of this assembly."

At the meeting of the council the following day, the bishop of Angoulême read a formal statement which had been drawn up by the bishops appointed to deliberate on

the matter. "We all," it was said, "condemn, by the authority of the church, and the judgment of the Holy Spirit, the privilege extorted from the pope by king Henry.* We declare it to be null and void, and sentence to excommunication whoever may acknowledge its authority. It is said, in the writing referred to, that a bishop elected canonically by the clergy and the people, shall not be consecrated till he have received investiture from the king. This is in opposition to the Holy Spirit, and the canonical institutions of the church."

By this proceeding of the council, the peaceful relations of the pope and the emperor were again disturbed. Pascal would never violate his oath, and no formal sentence of excommunication, therefore, was fulminated against him. But in another council, held at Rome, about four years after the former, Pascal was again obliged to confess his error in the privilege which he had granted, and, declaring it void, threatened with an anathema those who should give or receive the investiture as condemned by Gregory VII.

The following year saw the emperor advancing at the head of an army towards Rome. Pascal immediately retired to Mount Cassino, and subsequently to Beneventum. Henry contented himself with insisting on some vain ceremonies, which the Roman clergy as resolutely refused to perform. The archbishop of Prague, however, consented to place the imperial crown upon his head, and for this was excommunicated by the pope, who had sent him to Henry as his legate. Pascal died in 1118, having

* The venerable personages who drew up this statement condescended to a witticism in their grave report. "Privilegium illud, quod non est privilegium, sed *pravilegium*."--Baronius, An. 1112. n. vii.

shortly before returned to Rome; and was succeeded by the bishop of Porto, Gelasius II., who had long been his most affectionate friend and counsellor.

But the election of the new pontiff was attended with circumstances which afford the most melancholy proofs of the gloomy character of the age. No sooner was it known, that the cardinals and others were assembled in the church chosen for the purpose, than Cencio Frangipane, a nobleman, in the interest of the emperor, and whose house was in the immediate neighbourhood, rushed to the spot, forced open the doors of the church, and seized the pope and his attendants. Gelasius himself was treated with greater cruelty than any of the other persons present. Cencio Frangipane, catching him by the throat, covered him with blows, and then dragged him, bleeding as he was, to his residence. There he kept him as a prisoner, till the middle of the night; when the people, gaining tidings of what had taken place, gladly obeyed the summons of the principal officers of government, and hastened to deliver the captive pontiff. The family of Frangipane now discovered how perilous an experiment they had made. One of the chief offenders fell at the feet of Gelasius, and implored his pardon. The rest gladly opened the doors to let him depart. He was accordingly conveyed in triumph to his home; and the following day, received the congratulations of all the great authorities in the city.

For some few months, Gelasius enjoyed the prospect of a tranquil pontificate. But his hopes were quickly dissipated by the announcement that the emperor was at the gates of Rome. He had shared the captivity of Pascal, and well knew how little reason he had to expect forbearance on the part of the angry monarch. It was in

the middle of the night that he received the intelligence of Henry's approach. Rising from his bed, he hastily attired himself, and, calling a few trusty friends around him, prepared to leave the city. But it was now discovered that escape was almost impossible. All the roads about Rome were occupied by the Germans. In this perplexity one of the pontiff's attendants suggested, that they might make their way to a place of safety by the mouth of the Tiber. This suggestion was adopted, and Gelasius and his friends, after many perils, reached Gaeta unharmed.

The emperor, in the meantime, saw the danger of exciting the permanent hostility of the church. He accordingly sent messages to Gelasius, desiring his return to Rome, there to receive the customary consecration. But Gelasius acquainted the bearers of the imperial dispatches, that he was about to be consecrated where he then was, and that the ceremony having been performed, he would then willingly listen to any proposals of the emperor, which might tend to the establishment of peace, and the good of the church. Not satisfied with this, Henry ordered his favourite, the archbishop of Prague, to be consecrated pope. His commands were obeyed by the servile ecclesiastics whom his presence awed; and the rival of Gelasius assumed the title of Gregory VIII. The retirement of the emperor into Germany, was the signal for a new attempt on the part of Gelasius to recover his legitimate position. He secretly returned to Rome, and on his arrival in the city immediately took up his abode in one of the obscurest churches opened for his reception. But cautious as he had been, his presence was soon made known to his bitter enemy, Cencio Frangipane. An armed crowd was at the door of the church. The devotion of his faithful followers protected Gelasius from the

swords of the assailants. He fled from the midst of the bloody encounter into the open country. There he was found by some of his friends, fainting with alarm and fatigue. "Let us," he said to them, "follow the example of our fathers, and the precept of the gospel. As they will not let us live in this city, let us flee into another, leaving behind us this Sodom and this Egypt." His wishes were readily obeyed. He and his friends hastened into Provence. His rank and virtues obtained him an affectionate reception there; but he lived only a few months, his last days being spent in the monastery of Clugni.

It is indicative of the unsettled state of the church at this time, that the ecclesiastics attendant upon Gelasius assumed the right of immediately electing his successor. Their choice fell upon Gui, archbishop of Vienne, a man of experience, but proud and severe. He took the title of Calixtus II., and his election was celebrated at Rome as one of the happiest events which the church had lately known. On the announcement of his approach to the city, the soldiery and vast crowds of people proceeded to meet him. All parties, the Greeks, as well as the Latins, and even the Jews, were anxious to express their joy at the arrival of a pontiff, whose character encouraged them to believe that he would be able to restore peace to their distracted city. But, like Gelasius, he was obliged to yield to the imperial party. The anti-pope held possession of the strongest places in Rome. Finding this to be the case, he retired to Beneventum. There he concerted measures for humbling his rival. At the fitting season he returned to Rome, and having collected a considerable body of troops, attacked Gregory in his retreat at Sutri. The unhappy anti-pope was seized, placed on

a mule with his face toward the tail, and with a raw sheep-skin, the bloody side outward, on his back. In this manner he was obliged to enter Rome, and there would have speedily perished by the hands of the multitude, had not Calixtus, with some feeling of pity, snatched him away, and sent him to spend the sad remainder of his days in a monastery.

The new pontiff made good use of his victory. While his popularity and power were still at the height, he assailed the fortified residences of the Frangipani, and of other seditious nobles. By depriving them of their strongholds, he compelled them to submit to the jurisdiction of the laws; and Rome enjoyed, during the few years of his pontificate, a degree of tranquillity to which it had been long a stranger. His death made way for the renewal of schism in all its worst forms. Honorius II. was elected by the influence of the Frangipani; and he was allowed to retain his dignity undisturbed. But at the termination of his pontificate, which lasted about five years, Innocent II. and Anacletus II. were simultaneously elected to the vacant dignity, and each, according to the apparent conviction of his party, with an equal claim to its legitimate possession. Innocent, however, speedily acquired the ascendancy; and though he was obliged to forsake Rome for an asylum beyond the Alps,* he found himself acknowledged by the most powerful princes in Europe. For this, he was greatly indebted to the influence of the venerable bishop of Grenoble, and to the celebrated Saint Bernard. Instructed by these holy men,

* "*Hoc statu miserando collocata erat tunc temporis Romana ecclesia, in qua triumphante antichristo cogeretur verus Christi vicarius exulare, in templo sancto, in Petri throno, abominatione sedente.*"

—Baronius, An. 1130, n. iii.

the king of France rejected all the pretensions of Ariacletus, and promised faithful obedience to Innocent. Bernard, having sought the English monarch, who was then in France, reproved him for delaying to acknowledge the rightful pontiff. Seeing that Henry still hesitated, he exclaimed, "Do you suppose that you will be committing a sin, if you yield obedience to Innocent? If so, prepare to render an account to God for your other offences; I will take this upon myself." The monarch could not resist the force of Bernard's persuasions. He immediately summoned his attendants; and hastening to Chartres, where Innocent had taken up his abode, he prostrated himself at his feet, promised him a filial obedience, and then taking him to Rouen loaded him with valuable presents. Nor was he less graciously acknowledged by Lothaire, king of Germany, who, being at Liege, with his court, entreated the pontiff to visit him in that city. Innocent consented to do so, and on approaching the town, he was met by a cortége of nobles and bishops, headed by Lothaire himself, on foot. The monarch, taking the bridle of the horse on which the pope was seated, conducted him to the gates of the city. He then assisted him to alight; and in his whole demeanour exhibited to the admiring multitude his profound reverence for his guest. But Lothaire's devotion was not, perhaps, wholly pure. He sought the first opportunity to desire of Innocent the settlement of the dispute respecting investitures. Terror filled the minds of the pope and his friends, as soon as the subject was named. Their perplexity increased with every word which the king uttered. Happily for them Saint Bernard was present, and his bold, fervent protest against any concession which involved the surrender of the

church's rights, effectually silenced the monarch's pretensions.

The good understanding established between Innocent and Lothaire seemed mutually advantageous. In the year 1133, they proceeded together into Italy, and on the fourth of June, the coronation of the emperor was celebrated at Rome with all the solemnity which circumstances would allow. Anacletus, however, still held possession of the church of St. Peter, and of the strongest places in and about the city. Aided at the same time by the forces of Roger, king of Sicily, he despised the threats of both Innocent and the emperor. The latter soon discovered the uselessness of his attempt to overawe him. He, therefore, quietly left Rome at the end of seven weeks, and was quickly followed by the pope, whose life as well as dignity were in peril from the adherents of Anacletus. But the death of the latter, in 1138, terminated, for a time, this wretched schism, sufficiently afflicting, though regarded only as ruinous to the church in which it began, but exhibiting a far more distressing spectacle when viewed in reference to the general state of Christendom. Another anti-pope was chosen by the party which had supported Anacletus; but the rich and powerful family of the latter was weary of the strife which had so long destroyed its repose. It was intimated, therefore, to Innocent, that he would now be received in Rome as the true pope. He accordingly returned to that city; and the remainder of his pontificate was undisturbed by any rival pretender to the dignity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SAINT BERNARD—HIS EARLY LIFE—THE MONASTERY OF
CLAIRVAUX—PUBLIC LABOURS OF BERNARD—SCHOLASTIC
PURSUITS OF THE AGE—CONTROVERSIES—ABELARD.

THE name of Saint Bernard has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. His labours were continued through a period, the events of which influenced the state of the church and society, long after those by whom they were brought about had passed away. Bernard was the son of a knight, the descendant of a noble family in Burgundy. He was born in the year 1091, at Fontaines, near Dijon. While his father, Tecelin, devoted himself to the military duties, in which his chivalrous character engaged him, his mother, Aletta, a woman of singular piety and accomplishments, spent her time in the care of her children, and the practices of devotion. Having early destined Bernard to the service of the church, she sent him to the school attached to the cathedral of Châtillon. She did not live to witness, upon earth, the result of her pious care. But Bernard was soon absorbed in the pursuit of learning; till the recollection of his mother's fond desire that he should become a monk, checked his ambitious views, and filled him with anxiety, respecting his spiritual state.

While his thoughts were thus occupied, he undertook a journey to his brothers, then with the Burgundian army,

which was engaged in besieging the castle of Granci. On his way, he entered a solitary church by the roadside, and besought the Lord to strengthen him, that he might fulfil his present resolve to become his servant. His desire was accomplished. He felt his determination daily becoming stronger; and the happiness which he hoped to find, in a life of monastic retirement, and in the contemplation of eternal joys, he desired to share with all who were endeared to him, by the ties of blood or friendship.

Nothing is more powerful than religious fervour as a means of communicating sentiment, or inspiring sympathy. Bernard succeeded in convincing almost all his relatives, that it was both their duty, and their interest to resign the world, and devote themselves to a life of pious seclusion. As soon as their minds were sufficiently prepared for the step, he induced them to make such a disposition of their property as might leave them with little temptation to return to their former pursuits. He then retired with them into a house in the neighbourhood of Châtillon, where he determined to remain till his friends had become initiated in the rules and habits of a monastic life.

In a short time, Bernard had the satisfaction to see, that he had not miscalculated the sincerity, or earnestness, of his companions. They joined him in all the exercises of self-denial, and in all the studies which he deemed proper to give the mind a heavenly temper. Thus encouraged, he resolved upon entering the convent of Cîteaux, a religious house, situated in the most desolate part of the diocese of Chalons, and remarkable for the poverty, and the stern character of its few inmates. More than thirty of his friends and relatives followed Bernard to this monastery; and there he pursued that

course of holy meditation, which rendered him ever after so capable of speaking of the things of God, as one who had held near communion with heaven.

But he was not long allowed to enjoy these severe delights of religion undisturbed. His sanctity attracted notice. The convent of Citeaux was found too small for the number of persons who desired to join the society which could boast of so eminent a saint. Finding his influence beneficial, Bernard proceeded to found a new monastery. The spot which he chose for his purpose was in a wild, gloomy vale, formerly known as the Valley of Wormwood, and rendered still gloomier to the imagination by the traditionary account, that it was formerly the abode of banditti. The district pertained to the bishopric of Langres; and here Bernard raised his far-famed abbey of Clairvaux.

According to the rule of the church, it was necessary that he should be formally ordained to the office, before he could be recognised as head of the new convent. The bishop of Langres was, at the time, sick; and Bernard had, therefore, to receive consecration from the bishop of Châlons. It is related that he was accompanied by a tall, sturdy monk, and that when, pale and emaciated, as he was, by long fasting and watching, he presented himself before the prelate, the contrast between him and his companion provoked a general laugh among the assembled clergy. But it was evident to the good bishop, that if the report of Bernard's virtues and ability might be depended upon, he ought not to be allowed to trifle with a life which might prove so eminently useful to the church. He, therefore, resolved to exercise his authority in restraining the enthusiasm of the new abbot. Instead of allowing him to pursue uninterruptedly the duties of

his office, he desired him to remain for a time in a separate dwelling. He, also, obliged him to accept the services of an attendant, whose duty it was to make him take nourishment, and prevent him from indulging in any of those pious excesses, under which his frame appeared so rapidly sinking. At length, Bernard commenced his duties, as abbot of Clairvaux.

It is a remarkable fact, and one of those eminently deserving of attention, that many of the men whose labours have effected the greatest benefits for society, have prepared themselves for their work by a long season of retirement and meditation. Bernard frequently spoke, in after life, of the advantages which he had derived from his early days of prayer and solitude. It was whilst he could freely devote himself to the exercises of religion, that his soul gathered the rich stores of experience on which he seemed afterwards to repose in his encounters with the world.

The life of a monk was ordinarily very different from that which Bernard led. He found himself called upon to give counsel to princes, to mitred abbots, and bishops; to plead for the afflicted, and chastise the proud. The confidence placed in his wisdom, rendered his decision final, but the confidence thus felt arose originally from the profound admiration which men of all classes entertained for his piety. In the course of a few years, the number of those who sought his instruction became so great, that he was obliged to form a rule for their guidance in monasteries established according to the model of Clairvaux. These new institutions soon shared the popularity of the original establishment; and, thus, in an age which had become remarkable for the degeneracy of the monastic orders, monks might be found whose devotion, and sim-

plicity of manners, still preserved some of the features of the ancient brotherhoods.

One of the greatest afflictions which Bernard had to bear, arose from the want of discipline in the neighbouring convent of Clugni. This magnificent institution was universally celebrated for its extent, and for the luxurious habits of its inmates. Bernard had a young nephew, whom he had induced to enter his own monastery of Clairvaux. On some occasion, however, when matters of importance obliged him to be absent, the young man listened to an invitation from the abbot of Clugni, and proceeding to that convent, took up his permanent abode there. The habits of the monks of Clugni were the very reverse of those for which Bernard and his companions were distinguished; and the former, on hearing of the departure of his nephew, considered him as one exposed to spiritual ruin. His letter to the young man has always been regarded as a beautiful specimen of his general style of speaking and writing, when anxious for the souls of those whom he loved. The tenderness and humility with which he was ready to accuse himself of error, were characteristic of his mind; and had we no more of his works remaining but this epistle, we should not be without a clue to the secret of his wonderful power over such vast numbers of his contemporaries. "I have long," he says, "and impatiently expected, my dear son Robertus, that God, in his mercy, would be pleased to touch thy heart and mine, at the same time inspiring thee with a hearty repentance, and affording me the delight of beholding thy conversion. But, seeing all my hopes disappointed, I can no longer conceal my grief, repress my sorrow, or dissemble my vexation. It is this which obliges me to violate the order, which ought to be ob-

served, and to recall him who has offended me; to court the person by whom I have been grievously slighted; to give satisfaction to one who has affronted me; and, in a word, to beg of him, who ought to beg of me."

Alluding then to the excuses advanced by the young man, and which were founded on the severity of the discipline observed at Clairvaux, he says, "I ask not why you went away, but I heartily grieve that you are not returned. Come but awhile, and I shall be satisfied. I own it was my fault that you left me. I was, perhaps, too rigid towards one so young. Yet I might still excuse myself; for I might remind you, that the follies of inexperienced youth ought to be suppressed by a severe discipline, and that our early years should be subject to the strictest rule of reason. But I will not insist upon this. I will take all upon myself. I only am in the wrong. I will be altogether otherwise than formerly. Do but return, and fear nothing. Others might press upon you the recollection of your offence; terrify you with thoughts of guilt; lay before you the contents of your vow; threaten you with God's judgments; condemn your disobedience; and accuse you of apostasy. But I will not do thus: no! I will rather endeavour to reclaim you by kindness and persuasion."

His account of what he supposed to be the method employed by the abbot of Clugni to induce the young man to remain in his convent, is amusing and useful, as intimating the ordinary state of monastic discipline in those days. The abbot had sent a prior with the invitation to Robertus; and Bernard, in alluding to this person, says, "This preacher of the new gospel, I suppose, cried up good cheer; condemned self-denial and parsimony; and told him, whom he was addressing, that vo-

luntary poverty was a real misery, and that fasts, watchings, prayer, and labour were a mere folly. To idleness, he probably gave the name of contemplation; and that of discretion to gluttony, babbling, and niceness. Perhaps he demanded of him, whether he could believe, that God was pleased with tormenting us; or whether the Scriptures anywhere commanded us to murder ourselves? What religion there could be in digging the ground, cutting wood, carrying manure, or the like? And who, again, was the wise man, he that hated his own flesh, or he that cherished it? Now the poor youth was easily seduced by such insinuating discourse, and so led to Clugni; where they shave his head, place him in a bath, tear off his coarse and homely habits, and put on others, that were new and costly. Then he is conducted in triumph about the monastery; everybody commends him, and rejoices at his coming among them.”*

Bernard had to endure a long contention before he could convince either his nephew, or the abbot of Clugni, of the truth or value of his reproofs. Other cases, also, occurred, in which some of the brotherhood of Clairvaux, or of the monasteries connected with it, were persuaded into seeking relief from the severities which he regarded as essential to the correction of their worldly dispositions. In some instances, they sought to justify themselves by an appeal to higher authority. Thus the monks of a particular convent, having sought a dispensation from the pope to excuse their conduct, pleaded this with Bernard, when he reproved them as guilty of a grievous error. “We have asked leave, you tell me, of the holy see, and have obtained it. But would to God that instead of

* Bern. Op. Ep. 1.

asking leave, you had asked for counsel; that would have contributed more, both to your own benefit, and to my satisfaction. But, again; why did you ask this leave? Was it not because you desired to do what you ought not to have done? Now what you ought not to do, is ill when done; and you have got, it seems, permission to do it. You will say, perhaps, that what you asked is only wrong, when permission has not been obtained; and that, being permitted, it ceases to be evil. I have shown, however, that your petition was not of this kind; but a public scandal, forbidden by the law of God; so that this conduct of yours was not less blameable because it was allowed by the pope, who, I am confident, would never have consented to your demands, had he not been deceived, or overcome by your importunity."

Two things were especially insisted upon by Bernard, as necessary to the good management of monasteries; the continuance of the monks in one place, and their proper obedience to the abbot. "But why," he says, "some one may ask, do you condemn all those who are not ready to live in all respects like yourself? Now, I do not condemn them for this. I know that there are many holy men who do not follow my rule of life; and, while I give a reason why I receive those who desire it of me, I blame not those who do not desire it. I excuse the one, without accusing the other. It is the envious only whom I cannot, and will not excuse. In respect to others, if there be any who desire to pursue the monastic life in its purity, but dare not for fear of scandal, or cannot, because of some infirmity, I do not believe they commit any sin thereby, providing that they live soberly, justly, and devoutly, in the place where they are. And if they be sometimes obliged to live a little more loosely than our

rules prescribe, they may be excused, either by the charity, which covers a multitude of faults, or by the humility which makes us sensible of our own weakness and imperfection."

It was thus that this holy and enlightened man could reason, when the generality of his contemporaries were allowing themselves to indulge in the vainest, or most dangerous perversions of moral truth. Devoted as he was to the cause of monasticism, he never permitted his enthusiasm to darken his judgment on matters of practical importance to religion or to society. Instead, therefore, of shutting himself up in his cell, or adopting a course which would have had a greater appearance of monastic perfection, he obeyed every call which obliged him to appear in the world, when by his voice or influence he could promote the cause of justice. He neither feared the frowns, nor desired the favour of the great. Popes, cardinals, bishops, and princes, were all judged by him according to the same rule of religion and good sense. Hence the freedom with which he spoke of decisions which rested on the authority of the highest personages in the church; hence, the severity with which he rebuked vice, wherever found; and the bold efforts which he was continually making to check the growth of those corruptions, under which the interests of holiness were every day suffering some grievous harm. His capacity was equal to the greatest affairs. Fervent as he was, his penetrating mind saw clearly how public affairs were to be treated; and no ecstatic vision was suffered to disturb his view of the present necessity, or of the consequences of a particular decision.

The life of Saint Bernard, therefore, was spent in the performance of duties, which rendered him a blessing to

the age. Had it not been for him, the worldly-minded, the haughty and intriguing Anacletus would have been recognised as pope, instead of Innocent II, a man of virtue and learning. So also to his interference the church was indebted for the suppression of the disorders ready to appear again at the mention of investitures. A remarkable instance of his power, as exercised in aid of public tranquillity, was afforded in his visit to Milan. Anselm, the archbishop of that city, was at open war with his clergy. The people, anxious for peace, besought the interference of Bernard. He was then on his way from the council of Pisa. Yielding to the entreaties of the clergy, and others, who represented to him the dispositions of their brethren, he undertook the office of mediating between the contending parties. On his entering the city, the most intense desire was shown to prove how highly he was honoured. The splendid ornaments with which the churches were too sumptuously decorated, were removed, as offensive to his known love of simplicity. Both the clergy and people clothed themselves in garments consorting better than their usual habits with Christian humility. At his word, numerous prisoners of war were restored to liberty; and every one seemed ready to perform some act of faith or charity, which obtained the blessing of this holy man. Anselm had already been driven from the city, when Bernard arrived. But affairs were not improved by his expulsion. The dispute had arisen from the determination of the Milanese to support the ancient independence of their church, against the power of Rome. Anselm had only fulfilled the wishes of the clergy of his province, by refusing to accept the pallium from the pope. But he had offended them in other respects, and, Roboald, the bishop of a neigh-

bouring city, had been invited to supply his place. This prelate would gladly have reconciled himself to Rome; but all parties opposed his doing aught which might involve the sacrifice of the rights of their church. Before Bernard left the city, they entreated him to become the archbishop. But he had resolved never to accept any ecclesiastical dignity. Finding, however, that nothing which he said could silence the clamours of the people, he had recourse to an innocent artifice. "To-morrow," he said, "I will mount my horse, and if it carry me out of your city, let it be regarded as a sign that I must not fulfil your request. If, however, it should refuse to bear me beyond the walls, I will then consent to become your archbishop." It was with an anxious look, the next day, that multitudes of the devout Milanese saw Bernard mount his horse, and ride towards the gates of the city. But those who expected a miracle, were destined to be disappointed. Bernard's horse bore him very quietly beyond the walls; and his master, not deeming his further stay at Milan necessary, continued his journey towards Pavia.

Roboald, though now recognised as archbishop, would have found himself involved in countless perils, but for the interference of Bernard. In a letter to the Milanese, he besought them to submit to the wishes of Innocent II., and allow their prelate to receive the pallium at his hands. The views expressed in this epistle breathe the same spirit of charity and devout feeling, as that which characterizes all his other writings. But he recognises in his exhortations to the Milanese, the most unlimited demands of papal sovereignty, and which, if allowed, must at once have reduced their church, and every other church, to a state of servile dependence upon Rome.

"Unlimited power," he said, "belonged to the apostolic see. All particular churches were subject to it, so that the pope, if he deemed it right, could establish a new bishopric, or convert a bishopric into an archbishopric; and possessed entire authority to summon before him, whenever he pleased, the most exalted prelates."*

Earnestly, however, as Bernard exhorted the people and clergy of Milan, to suffer their archbishop to receive the p^allium from the Roman pontiff, he was no less anxious to induce the latter to forego, for the present, some portion of his demands. Innocent was too much indebted to Bernard to refuse compliance with his wishes in this respect. The Milanese, therefore, were left in the enjoyment of their independence; and thus a victory, of no small importance, considering the spirit of the times, was gained over the Roman hierarchy. But the peace which resulted from the concessions of Innocent was the fruit of Bernard's influence; and while this was known in every part of Italy, his authority, and the reverence for his character, were proportionably increased.

Another instance may be cited of the peculiar awe in which he was held on account of the holiness of his character. The count of Aquitaine and Poitou, William the Ninth, had embraced the cause of the anti-pope, Anacletus. Not being able to induce the bishops of his

* "*Plenitudo siquidem potestatis super universas orbis ecclesias singulari prærogativæ apostolicæ sedi donata est. Qui igitur huic potestati resistit, Dei ordinationi resistit. Potest, si utile judicaverit, novos ordinare episcopatus, ubi hactenus non fuerunt. Potest eos qui sunt, alios deprimere, alios sublimare, prout ratio sibi dictaverit; ita ut de episcopis creare archiepiscopos liceat, et e converso, si necesse visum fuerit.*"—Epis. 131.

principality to adopt the same course, he had driven several of them from their dioceses. As they were men of piety, Bernard beheld the proceedings of the court with just indignation. He was easily induced, therefore, to accompany the pope's legate on a mission to the count of Aquitaine. The count did not long resist the exhortations of the two venerable men, respecting the claims of Innocent. In vain, however, did they urge upon him the duty of reinstating the deposed prelates. Nothing could induce him to pardon their supposed offences against his sovereign authority. Bernard, finding that persuasion would be vain, resolved upon a measure, which, however opposed to our present ideas of propriety, was doubtless suggested to him by a feeling in perfect harmony with his reverence for divine mysteries.

Proceeding with a number of attendants to the church, Bernard commenced the performance of the eucharistic service with all the solemn pomp and ceremony proper to the rite. The count, who lay under sentence of excommunication, did not dare to approach the altar, but stood at the door of the church, contemplating the ceremony with mingled distress and anger. Bernard, having consecrated the bread, and pronounced the customary blessing, looked towards the spot where William had placed himself amid a crowd of guards and courtiers, and taking the paten in his hand, hastened down the aisle of the church, till he stood face to face with the prince. Astonishment filled the minds of the spectators; but this was converted into awe, when, with a stern voice, and an expression of profound indignation in his countenance, he thus addressed him: "Twice already have the servants of the Lord united in supplicating you to do that which is right and holy. But you have despised their entrea-

ties. Now, therefore, behold the blessed Son of the Virgin! He who is the head and Lord of that church, which you persecute, now appears before you. Behold then your Judge. See Him at whose voice every knee shall bow in heaven and earth; the Judge to whom you must one day surrender your soul. Will you despise and reject Him as you have despised and rejected his servants?"

Grief and terror seized the hearers as Bernard thus continued to speak. Not a sound could be heard in the church, but that of whispered prayers and sighs, expressive of the feelings with which the hearts of all were oppressed. The guilt of the prince seemed to be shared by his people and vassals, and now it appeared as if a voice from heaven was about to bring down upon them the merited chastisement. But while the congregation were exhibiting these signs of alarm, the count himself had sunk beneath the overpowering dread inspired by the words of Bernard. Trembling, as if in the agonies of death, he lay prostrate on the ground. When raised by his attendants, he again fell; nor was it till Bernard exhorted him to rise and listen to the commands of God, that he could be restored to composure. "Behold," said the abbot, "here is the bishop of Poitiers, whom you have driven from his diocese: hasten to be reconciled to him; confirm that reconciliation by the holy kiss of Christian love; conduct him to his episcopal throne; and exhort all the schismatics in your territories forthwith to return to the communion of the church."

The spirit of the count was too much broken not to rejoice in being able to recover peace and deliverance on such easy terms. He flew to the bishop, and bestowing upon him the kiss of peace, gladly reinstated him in all his former honours.

Bernard having effected so much during his absence from Clairvaux, now anxiously yearned for rest and solitude. He rejoiced, therefore, to find himself at liberty from any immediate public cares; and hastening to his beloved retreat, he again devoted his time to prayer, and the instruction of his brethren. With a heart keenly alive to the beauties of nature, he delighted to spend his tranquil hours in the gardens of the convent. There, seated in a bower, shaded by honeysuckle and other twining plants, he prepared those sweet and pathetic little discourses on the Canticles, with which he gave a new interest to the spiritual exercises of the monks.

The part which men like Bernard took in promoting the crusades, has been already alluded to. Such a design was in perfect harmony with the general tone of his feelings. He reasoned on political affairs with acuteness and decision. But, when the subject was one in which sentiment and imagination might blend themselves with the teachings of conscience, he readily surrendered his soul to the current, and allowed it to bear him in whatever direction it might flow. Hence the profound interest which he felt in the crusades. They were the apparent effect of that fervent devotion which it was always his aim to cultivate. He believed them to be the fruit of a reawakened spirit in the church. As he was ready to sacrifice all for Christ, he was anxious to find some corresponding feeling in the great masses of mankind. But he knew that he must not look for this in the way of a pure, tranquil, and simple religion, operating the conversion of the heart, and leaving it then to the quiet development of its spiritual virtues. The age was too dark and corrupt, the temper of men too turbulent, for such things. If any great general movement was to be hoped

for, it must be expected according to the character of the times. The crusades appeared to Bernard both as the consequence of some inward revolution, and as calculated by their very nature to promote the higher interests of piety. He thought that warriors, instead of seeking a vain glory for themselves alone, or pursuing their career with no other aim than that of private aggrandisement, or personal revenge, might be converted by these sacred enterprises into soldiers of the Lord. By exciting the enthusiasm of the people, and directing it to objects which had, at least, a symbolic holiness, he hoped to break the fetters which had so long bound them to the base drudgery of the world.

These convictions and hopes rendered Bernard a firm advocate of the crusades; and to none of the churchmen of that period were the champions of the holy sepulchre more indebted than to him. His ardent eloquence kept the general enthusiasm alive, when it would otherwise have yielded to opposing influences. It was by his advice that the Knights Templars were constituted a regular order; and by this, and similar measures, he gave a consistency to the plans of the crusaders, the benefit of which was, in some degree, felt by them throughout the following century.

But the attention of Saint Bernard was soon after called to another important movement in the church, very different in its nature, but no less connected with questions of the highest interest to mankind. Though the speculations of learned men may appear to have too remote a bearing upon the state of the world, to affect it in any sensible degree, no great revolution can take place in modes of thought, or systems of reasoning, without its being felt, sooner or later, in the heart of

society. It is always useful, therefore, to mark the periods when intellectual changes have been attempted by men of commanding powers. Many a phenomenon in the ordinary mental, or moral, condition of the world, may be thereby explained. The mass of mankind, subject as they are to common sympathies, are far more under the dominion of thought, of reason, and imagination, than they themselves believe. The earnest attention, therefore, which men like Bernard have paid to the speculations of philosophers and theorists, has been one of the duties of their office. They could have provided neither for the present nor the future, had they wanted the knowledge which such an observation gave them.

The scholastic system of the middle ages was founded by Lanfranc, Anselm, and some few other eminent churchmen, who, weary of the constant repetitions of dogmatic theology, desired to subject its principles to the test of logic. Their wish was not the offspring of a proud reason, despising the simplicity of divine truth. It arose rather from the feeling that if religion were left to the defences of ecclesiastical tradition, it would have to wage an unequal contest with the world. The motives of those who originated the scholastic system can never be fairly judged unless due notice be taken of the peculiar circumstances under which it arose. Had it been commenced at a period when the light of the gospel shone bright and clear, the spirit of its founders might have been suspected. It would then have appeared as an antagonist to the truth, known and recognised in its completeness. But in the age when it began to exercise its influence on inquiring minds, the gospel itself lay burdened under a load of countless superstitions. Its light

was dimmed; its doctrines perverted; and, when the greatest of the schoolmen entered upon their perilous path of speculation, it was not because they disputed the sufficiency of revelation, or the power of divine grace, to pour light into the simplest minds, but because they saw the darkness of error and superstition increasing around them, and which, churchmen though they were, they felt instinctively the present tendencies of the church would but increase.

Of those who most distinguished themselves among the schoolmen of the age, was Peter Abelard. This celebrated man was born at Palais, near Nantes, in the year 1079.* From his earliest youth, he exhibited signs of extraordinary ability, and his success in the studies to which he was devoted, gained him a reputation proportioned to his genius. Under Roscelin, one of the most famous dialecticians of the time, he first became imbued with that love of subtle disputation which subsequently enticed him into the most questionable paths of philosophy. But it was not with a passion for learning which might be satisfied by ordinary means, that Abelard was inspired. He sought it with an enthusiasm which impelled him to resign everything for its sake. Thus, desiring to be freed from the obligations which the possession of his paternal estate might impose upon him, he gave up his right of inheritance to his younger brothers. Having performed this duty, he proceeded to Paris, and there commenced his studies under Guillaume de Champeaux, the most popular of the teachers of philosophy then in France.

After some years of profound study, interrupted only

* La Vie de Pierre Abeillard, t. i. p. 7. Paris, 1728.

by an interval of romantic passion, he appeared before the world as a teacher of the new system of dialectics. But his acuteness was not greater than his eloquence, and hence he speedily attracted an auditory far more numerous than that of the most famous of the men who had preceded him. With the common topics of the schools, he mingled the discussion of the great doctrines of Scripture. It was his object to show that the most mysterious principles of revealed religion are in immediate connexion with those which both the heart and the mind of man, when operating healthfully, are most ready to confess. But he could not speak on subjects of this kind, without some allusion to the authority of the church; to its general maxims and traditions. The alarm, therefore, which his bold style of argumentation had from the first excited, was greatly increased by his apparent opposition to the infallibility of the hierarchy. He was accordingly stigmatized with the name of heretic; and in the year 1121, was summoned before the synod of Soissons, to explain certain points in his lately published, "Introduction to Theology."

Had it not been for the generous interference of the bishop of Chartres, Abelard would probably have been condemned by the synod, without being allowed any fair opportunity of defending his cause. No persuasion could induce the members of the synod to listen to the account of his opinions, put into formal and distinct propositions. At length it was agreed, that he should be examined before another synod, to be assembled in Paris. This, however, so alarmed his present judges, that he was again summoned before them. Their determination not to let him escape was too evident. The good bishop of Chartres knew their temper; and finding his efforts in

behalf of the persecuted philosopher vain, he persuaded him to yield to necessity, and to quiet the rage of his enemies by obeying their commands, and throwing his book into the flames. Abelard adopted the advice of his venerable friend, and casting the volume into the fire, patiently submitted to be sent to a neighbouring convent, where he was imprisoned as a heretic. The indignation, however, which this proceeding excited in the minds of his numerous followers, alarmed the members of the synod, and he was soon delivered from confinement. He now returned to his own monastery, and spent some time in uninterrupted quiet and meditation. On appearing again in public, he was greeted with enthusiastic delight by those who properly appreciated his genius. But his enemies were still pursuing him; and he at last resolved to escape from strife by burying himself in a remote solitude, and passing the remainder of his days in silent communion with heaven.

In fulfilment of this design, he travelled into Burgundy, and finding a lonely valley, near Troyes, suited to his purpose, he there built himself a rude hut of the loose stones and branches of trees, with which the neighbourhood supplied him. Here he spent a considerable period. At length, the weariness attendant upon entire solitude to a mind like his, and the want of the common necessities of life, induced him to resume his duties as a public instructor. Opening a school of philosophy, his lectures were attended by crowds of eager inquirers. The fascination of his eloquence, the depth of his reasoning, had the same effect as in his earlier days, and had probably derived a new charm from the pathos which experience generally bestows on the language of men of genius.

But the resumption of his labours again exposed him to the jealous observation of his enemies. They beheld with indignation the increasing number of his scholars. His hermitage, and the little chapel which he had rudely constructed with his own hands, were replaced by edifices more suited to the dignity of his name. This was the work of the wealthy students who flocked around him; and the chapel of the Paraclete, as he delighted to call his once solitary place of prayer, became the point of reunion for a society, which soon assumed the character of an ascetic brotherhood.

A. D. 1140. The reports which reached the abbot of Clairvaux respecting the opinions taught by Abelard, filled him with alarm. Nothing would have induced him to join the personal enemies of this eminent man; but he was easily persuaded to apply the severe test of his own orthodoxy to the speculations for which Abelard, and his pupils, were every day becoming more famous. At first, he endeavoured by friendly converse to convince Abelard of the dangerous nature of his doctrines. But this produced no other effect than that of increasing the suspicion existing on the one side, and the pride of independence characterizing the other. In the year 1140, a synod was held at Sens. Abelard offered to defend his opinions before that assembly, if Bernard would fairly meet him in open debate. But the latter, whose tastes and habits of mind had nothing in common with those of the renowned dialectician, refused the challenge. However justified Bernard must have been in the eyes of those who properly considered the subject, his unwillingness to enter into a scholastic discussion with Abelard was regarded by the admirers of the latter, as leaving him master of the field. The effect

produced, even on the public mind, was unfavourable to the cause in which Bernard was so deeply interested. People began to question whether that could be the true exposition of divine doctrine, which its most celebrated champion feared openly to defend. They forgot that the inward convictions of a great and holy mind are of far higher worth, as a witness to the truth, than the most laboured of arguments addressed to the reason. They lost sight, moreover, of the important fact, that when Bernard refused to enter into dispute with Abelard, his conduct was only that of a person challenged declining to contend with an adversary who insisted upon using weapons which, from his known skill, must certainly secure his triumph.

But Bernard allowed himself to be moved by the persuasions of his friends. He agreed, contrary as it was to his own feelings, to appear face to face with Abelard at the synod. The meeting took place. The celebrated dialectician came to the contest armed at all points with thought and argument. Nor was he wanting in devout sentiment. There is no just reason to suppose, that, though the sense of vast intellectual power might excite his natural pride, or confidence, he was less anxious than his adversary for the glory of God. But Bernard, according to his own proper dispositions, took the course which we can so much better understand, as agreeing with the simple faith and spirit of a Christian. Applying to his case the admonition which our Lord addressed to his apostles, "When they deliver you up, take no thought how, or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour, what ye shall speak;"* he

* Matt. x. 19.

made no formal preparation for the encounter with Abelard. He believed that the promises of the Lord would be fulfilled in his behalf; and on the day appointed he appeared before the synod, fearless now of the skill of his opponent. Unhappily for the effect which this species of heroism, as exhibited by Bernard, might make upon the mind, he was in a far different position to that of the early disciples. They had nothing on which to trust but the promise of the Lord; and its literal fulfilment can alone account for their unfailing resolution, and the grandeur of their triumphs. In Bernard's case, on the contrary, there was the sympathy of a powerful party to stimulate his hope of success. He knew that the expression of his sentiments would be listened to in the council with the greatest reverence; and that he had but to insist upon Abelard's condemnation to secure its being pronounced.

The synod commenced its proceedings. Abelard presented himself, declaring his anxiety to repel the charges which were brought against him. But, to his confusion, he found that the liberty of expounding his opinions, fully and clearly, was again denied him. Bernard produced a number of statements selected from his writings, and a corresponding number of passages from the works of the fathers. Then, briefly showing in what points the one differed from the other, he demanded of Abelard, whether he would confess that the dogmas which he had put forth were false and heretical? Distressed, and, perhaps, alarmed, at seeing how little tolerance the synod was disposed to exercise towards him, Abelard at once appealed from its decision to the tribunal of the Roman pontiff. This awed his judges; but though it deterred them from passing a sentence which might have affected

his personal safety, it did not hinder their declaring his writings and opinions heretical.

Had the affair been allowed to stop here, Abelard would probably have quietly resumed his studies, and contented himself with his appeal against the decision of the synod. But Bernard felt too strongly on the subject to refrain from further measures. He induced the principal members of the council to join with him in addressing the pope. Letters were accordingly dispatched to Rome. The pontiff was entreated to confirm the sentence passed upon Abelard's writings, and to authorize his committal to some convent, where he might be prevented from doing any further mischief to the orthodoxy of the people.

Abelard was deeply affected at the treatment which he received. He abhorred the name of heretic; and, resolving to leave nothing undone which might enable impartial men to judge him aright, he published an apology, or confession of faith. In this work he protested solemnly, in the name of God, that he was not conscious of being guilty of the things laid to his charge; and that if he could be convinced of error, he would willingly and gladly renounce it. He further added, that though he might, through carelessness, have written, in some respects, what he ought not to have written, he had uttered nothing with a wrong design, or through pride; that he had always spoken in public, and had never concealed what he wrote; that if in any of the numerous lectures which he had delivered, extravagances could be pointed out, he would not persist in maintaining them; but that as it was his duty to correct the faults which he might have committed, he felt it was his duty to refute those accusations of error which were falsely brought against

him, and to adopt, in this respect, the maxim of Saint Augustine, who says, that, "he who is negligent of his reputation, is an enemy to himself."

The objections to Abelard's system of doctrine referred to some of the most solemn truths of the gospel. But these objections were not founded on any definite statement. They rested only on the mode of his reasoning; and on inferences which might be possibly drawn from the subtle nature of his argument. His reply, on the contrary, to the charges of his adversaries was plain and distinct, and it is important to the historical view of the theology of the age to hear this great man declaring, "that he abhorred the proposition which had been maliciously imputed to him, namely, that the Father had a perfect power, the Son only a certain power, and the Holy Ghost no actual power of any kind." In opposition to this, he asserted that the Son and the Holy Ghost are of the same substance with the Father, and have the same power, and the same will. So of our blessed Lord, he declared his belief to be, that the only begotten Son of God was made man to deliver us from the slavery of sin, and from the bondage of the devil; that He was begotten of the substance of the Father before all worlds; and of the Holy Ghost, that he proceeded from the Father and the Son.

Descending then to other portions of the Christian system, he affirmed his conviction to be, "that the grace of God is so necessary to all men that neither nature nor freewill is sufficient to salvation; but that grace must precede our will; follow it, that we may do what we will; and accompany, us that we may persevere." So also, he stated, that "though God cannot do anything but what is agreeable to his perfect nature, He has the power to do

many things which He will never do; that there are sins of ignorance, especially when that ignorance proceeds from our neglecting to learn what we ought to know; that God often hinders evil, either by preventing the evil will of wicked men, or by changing it; and that we have all contracted the guilt and punishment of Adam's sin, which is to be considered as the cause and original of all our sins."

Such were the main features of the theology taught by Abelard; and though Bernard might be fully justified in objecting to the terms in which he sometimes stated his opinions, or to the speculations with which he connected his exposition of his faith, he had doubtless no reason to charge with heresy a man who so solemnly proclaimed his adherence to all the great truths taught in the gospel, and forming the foundation of all the creeds which had ever been adopted by the church.

Abelard's appeal to Rome was regarded by many as a violation of ecclesiastical law; or rather of the rights of the bishops concerned in his condemnation. In former times, it would not have been suffered that the sentence of independent judges should be called in question by a reference even to the pope himself.* Bernard, however, and his party allowed it in this instance, in deference to the apostolic see, having little doubt, as it appears, that their own success would only be rendered so much the more conspicuous by the decision of the pontiff. Their expectations were not disappointed. Innocent II. readily assented to the wishes of the man whom he had so much reason to venerate. By a letter directed to Bernard, and

* "Nos autem, licet appellatio ista minus canonica videretur, sedi tamen apostolicæ deferentes, in personam hominis nullam volumus proficere sententiam."—Bernard. Op. Ep. 337.

the archbishops of Rheims and Sens, he ordered that Abelard's writings should be burnt, and that, according to their suggestion, he should be imprisoned in any convent which they thought best suited to separate him effectually from the world.

While these measures were in progress, Abelard was on his journey to Rome. The monastery of Clugni lay at no great distance from the direct route; and he had always entertained a profound regard for its present abbot, Peter the Venerable. Even the virtues of Bernard himself did not shine with greater lustre than those of this excellent man. Abelard felt that in his converse he might find the sweetest refreshment for his excited, but weary spirit. To Clugni, therefore, he went; and the hospitable manner in which he was received, the affectionate discourse of the abbot, and the respect manifested for him by the monks, produced a deep impression on his mind. He felt that in such an abode, and among such men, he could gladly spend the remainder of his days. Peter the Venerable beheld with joy the effect which the happy tranquillity of his monastery produced on Abelard's mind. He cherished, by every manifestation of sympathy, the devout feelings which seemed gradually overcoming the power of the passions aroused by the stormy career through which he had passed. The influence which he thus exercised was soon acknowledged by Abelard himself. He desired the abbot to let him make his permanent abode at Clugni. Peter readily consented, and immediately dispatched a letter to the pope, praying him to refrain from publishing his sentence against Abelard, now no longer to be feared. A conference, in the meantime, took place between Bernard and the latter. It ended in a perfect reconciliation. Abelard continued to enjoy at

Clugni all the peace and comfort which he expected to derive from the salutary tranquillity of its cloisters. His richly stored mind, still retaining its activity, displayed its best powers in the instruction which he delighted to bestow on the monks, and the value of which the abbot was as ready to acknowledge, as the members of his monastery were thankful to receive it. But his health was daily declining; and at the end of about two years, Peter, who watched him with the most affectionate solicitude, considered it advisable to send him for change of air, to a monastery at Chalons sur Saone. There, after a short time, his malady assumed a more alarming form; but he was tranquil and resigned. He reviewed his past life with the feelings of a humble penitent; and though some of the expressions which he used in his last letter to Heloise, may be interpreted in a way unfavourable to the evangelical character of his sentiments, his death appears to have exhibited an edifying proof of the power of divine grace to humble the proudest, and to tranquillize the most agitated of human spirits.*

Bernard had still a long season of labour before him after the death of Abelard. He was too deeply involved in the conduct of public affairs to be able to follow the impulses of his own feelings. The accession of Eugenius III. to the pontificate was attended by events which threatened the existing state of the church with a speedy overthrow. Eugenius was the personal friend of Bernard, and originally bore the same name. He had been appointed by Bernard to the government of a Cistercian monastery in Rome, and it was from this position that he was elevated to the highest dignity in the church. Like

* He died in the year 1143.

his predecessors, he had been compelled to leave Rome soon after his election, and find a refuge where he could. He was hospitably received at Viterbo, and there concerted plans for overcoming his sworn enemies the Tiburtines. He succeeded in raising an armed force sufficient for his purpose. Rome gladly opened its gates to him, and he enjoyed, for a short time, the honours due to his station. But new troubles were excited by the bitter hatred of the rival factions. Eugenius was again obliged to flee. He went into France. Bernard, in the meantime, employed his utmost influence to restore peace. He wrote both to the Romans and to the emperor, entreating the former to consider the heavy amount of sin which they were heaping upon their consciences, and exhorting the latter to lend the exiled pontiff such aid as might enable him to chastise the disturbers of the church.

But attention was now diverted from the state of affairs at home, to that of the church in the East; or, rather, to that of the Christian kingdom founded by the success of the first crusaders. The wisdom and energy with which Godfrey of Bouillon governed his newly-acquired dominions, promised a long continuance, of prosperity. But his successors were deficient in the virtues necessary to resist the power which daily threatened to overthrow them. The Saracens had already taken Edessa, and their rapid advances gave reason to fear that this was but the beginning of their triumphs.

Bernard was among the first to lament these misfortunes, and to concert measures for the relief of Jerusalem. By his persuasion, Eugenius was induced to summon a council to meet at Vezelai, in France. The king consented to be present. He was attended by his whole court, and the vast multitude which assembled to witness

the proceedings, appeared animated by the same enthusiasm as that which displayed itself at the council of Clermont. Bernard's eloquence increased this feeling; and such was the demand for crosses, that, having distributed the huge packet brought for the purpose, he was obliged to tear slips from his own garment to furnish the necessary badge for those who were unsupplied.

Another meeting was held, a few weeks after the former, at Chartres. Measures were now proposed for the conduct of the intended expedition, and, strange to say, it was determined to appoint Saint Bernard himself to be the leader of the host. Whatever were the reasons on which those who resolved to make him the general of their armies acted, they seem to have been as startling to Bernard, as they are incomprehensible to the reader of a later period. "I cannot imagine," he said, in a letter to Eugenius, "what could induce them to elect me as the head and leader of the forces. As far as I can judge of my strength, it would not be possible for me to accomplish the route. But even if I could, what am I, that I should pretend to arrange an army in order of battle, and to march at the head of troops? And, supposing that I could, what would be further from my profession? I conjure you, by the love which you owe me, not to expose me to the will of man, but to consult, in all things, the will of God."*

But though he ridiculed the idea of his being appointed to conduct the army, he lost none of his zeal, or fervour, in pleading the crusade from city to city, and province to province. Thus he traversed a large portion of France, arousing both the people and the nobles to

* Ep. 224.

the duty of joining the expedition. He then passed into Germany, and sought the court of the emperor Conrad. A vast number of persons had already prepared themselves for the crusade; but they were led by a monk whose fanaticism gave licence to the wildest and most dangerous passions. Bernard employed his authority in checking the disorders which had been created by these rude soldiers of the cross. He was received by Conrad with the respect due to his character. But his first address produced little effect on the mind of the emperor. Conrad could not be made to feel an interest in affairs unconnected either with his own prosperity, or with that of his subjects. Bernard was too wise to express his disappointment at the failure of his arguments. He patiently awaited other opportunities. The emperor admitted him to several private audiences. On these occasions the venerable abbot exercised all the power of his fatherly affection and eloquence, to induce him to take a course which he believed to be as good for his own spiritual state, as it would be useful to the cause in which he wished him to engage. Still he failed of his object; till at length, worn out with his entreaties, Conrad one day assured him that on the morrow he would give him his final answer. Bernard knew that that answer would not be such as he wished, if Conrad remained in his present state of feeling. The next day the emperor attended divine service with a splendid retinue of guards and courtiers. Bernard performed mass; and at the end of the service addressed the congregation in a sermon, the main subject of which was the crusade. When he found his hearers most deeply affected by the appeal which he was making, he turned to the emperor, and directed his discourse to him with such fervour and earnestness, that

Conrad could no longer remain unmoved. Bursting into tears, he exclaimed aloud, that he now felt that he should be resisting God, if he refused to join the expedition; that he was, therefore, ready to assume the cross; and would proceed to the holy land, as soon as he could assemble his forces. Most of the noblemen present made the same declaration. The congregation was moved to ecstasies of joy, and Bernard's triumph was complete. He had thus fulfilled his mission; and leaving one of the most eloquent of his order to exhort the Germans to perseverance, he returned to France.

It was the saddest hour in Bernard's life, when he received intelligence of the utter failure of the expedition from which he had promised so much glory to the church, and so much good to Palestine. The king of France and the emperor had both risked their riches and their honour in the undertaking. They reaped only disappointment; and the reproaches heaped upon them by their subjects, were shared in a large degree by Saint Bernard. He was viewed in the light of a false prophet. The glowing expressions which he had used were recalled to mind. It was remembered how he had persuaded the eager multitude, the greater part of whom had perished on the sandy plains of the East, to believe that they were going to reap unfading laurels. His addresses to Louis of France, and to the emperor, were criticised with fearful severity; and piety itself seemed exposed to obloquy, because the hopes had not been fulfilled with which the fervent language of a holy man had inspired a crowd of fanatics.

Bernard, though intensely grieved at the result of the crusade, was not disposed to confess that the charges brought against him were justified by the event. He

contended, that the reverses endured by the crusaders, and their final defeat, might be traced to their own licentiousness and folly. Wise and good men were ready to acknowledge the truth of Bernard's argument. They felt that the blessing of God could not be looked for when the main principles of holiness were violated; and that where a general success may be promised to undertakings commenced in the fear of the Lord, and with due attention to means and circumstances, it is no proof that the promise was not wisely given, if the design fail through the folly and wickedness of those engaged in its execution.

The interval between this occurrence and Bernard's return to France, had been employed in a painful struggle against the authors of opinions which had, at least, the appearance of an heretical character, or tendency. Gilbert, bishop of Poitiers, was one of the celebrated logicians of the age. Like other men of similar commanding intellect, he beheld with impatience the servile spirit with which the generality of his contemporaries subjected their thoughts to the dictates of their predecessors. He applied his dialectic art to the doctrines of the church. The result was an exposition of the principles of faith, which, like most other similar attempts, seemed to remove the one difficulty proper to a divine mystery, only to involve it in a multitude of others as proper to it when it is converted into an intellectual theory. Eugenius being still in France, a synod was assembled at Rheims. Bernard appeared there as the accuser of the bishop. The main point of dispute originated in Gilbert's views respecting the mode in which we ought to form our conception of the Godhead. Neither Eugenius nor Bernard could endure the nice distinctions which he introduced into his system. But he was supported by a large body

of the cardinals, who now began to charge Bernard with exercising too great an influence on the pontiff. The sentence, therefore, which the latter was ready to pronounce upon the bishop, fell harmless to the ground. A confession of faith had been drawn up by Bernard and his friends, as the true creed of the church; but it was agreed by both parties, that this should only be regarded in the light of a private statement of opinion, on Gilbert's formally submitting himself to the judgment of the pope.

A dangerous controversy was suppressed by this mutual forbearance. But other sources of agitation existed. The Paulicians of ancient times, and of which so little is really known, had their representatives in the middle ages. Sects described by the titles of Cathari, Bogomiles, and Petrobrusians, seem to have preserved, both in the East and in the West, a species of traditionary knowledge of primitive doctrine and practices. Their origin may be traced, in common, to the desire entertained by many men of stern principles to purify the church, and to oblige the clergy to check the rapid progress of worldly corruption, pride, and avarice. The last-named sect was founded by Peter de Bruys, a priest, in the south of France, and who is generally supposed to have derived his doctrines from the earnest study of the Bible. He regarded the numerous ceremonies of the church as injurious to the simplicity of the gospel; and the offering of the mass was opposed, in his eyes, to the honour of the sacrifice of Christ made, once for all, on the cross. But he was impelled by a zeal which seems to have refused the ordinary restraints of prudence. Hence he assailed not only the abuses of the church, but the ordinances which had Scripture, as well as primitive authority, for their support. But he was a man of virtue and holiness,

and had the ruling ecclesiastics of the time acted towards him with mildness and discretion, he might probably have been induced to give up that which was erroneous in his system, and most injurious to the tranquillity of the church. Instead, however, of proceeding thus, they represented him in the most odious character to the people, and succeeded at last in provoking an infuriate rabble to hurry him to the scaffold, and satisfy their thirst for his blood, without waiting for even the form of a trial.

But the sect which Peter de Bruys had founded was not diminished by the persecutions to which it was exposed. It obtained another leader in the person of Henry of Lausanne, a monk and a deacon. His knowledge of Scripture, and natural ability, made him a powerful preacher. The influence which he acquired over his followers rendered him a formidable opponent to the clergy, whose vices he reproved with fearless severity. It was not till after a career of many years that the court of Rome could find a favourable opportunity for apprehending him. At length he was brought before the papal legate, sent with Bernard into Languedoc for the purpose. Being sentenced to perpetual imprisonment he was committed to a convent, where he soon after died. But his followers cherished his memory with profound affection, and thus another sect, under the name of the Henricians, was added to those already existing.

Alarming, however, as was the attitude assumed by such reformers as Peter de Bruys and Henry of Lausanne, it had none of the terrors for Rome which were inspired by the name of Arnold of Brescia. This remarkable man was a scholar of Abelard. He had been admitted to the priesthood; and was distinguished not only for his ge-

nus, but for his sound practical understanding, and his desire to accomplish a reformation in the church, which might be attended with a corresponding improvement in the general state of the people. His first endeavour was to convince the clergy, that they could not, without violating the duties of their calling, claim for themselves temporal power, honours, or riches. The higher their dignity, the more heavily fell the censures of Arnold upon those whom they reached. No exception was made in favour of bishops, cardinals, or even the pope himself. A strange excitement was produced at Rome by the fervent and daring eloquence of this new reformer. As his addresses on the practical correction of abuses were wholly free from any logical subtleties, they were easily made applicable to the purposes of those political reformers who now abounded in Rome.

Arnold himself was soon induced to form a systematic plan of reform. He desired to liberate the people from the domination of the church in civil matters, and to restore the government of ancient times. His word was sufficient to stimulate the Roman citizens to the wildest enthusiasm. They panted for the liberty which he so eloquently described; and, in the end, the people rose, determined no longer to submit to the ignominious bondage to which fraud, ignorance, and corruption had bowed them. But thus roused, they refused to be guided by the pure and noble spirit which had taught them to desire truth and liberty. They proceeded to acts of violence which threatened Rome with desolation. Arnold deeply lamented their conduct. He laboured to elevate their sentiments, and so to correct the evils which attended the insurrection. His influence might in time have accomplished the grand moral change upon which

his thoughts were fixed ; but on the accession of Adrian IV. to the papal throne he was obliged to flee. The new pope placed the city under an interdict as the penalty of its adherence to the opinions of Arnold. Terrified at the gloom which pervaded the capital ; trembling lest some awful judgment might fall upon those who had thus caused the voice of supplication and praise to be silenced at the altars, the clergy and magistrates assembled together, and presenting themselves before the pontiff, promised to exert their power to the utmost to root out Arnold's heresy. Adrian readily listened to their declarations. The emperor Frederic Barbarossa was on his way to Rome. Three cardinals were sent to meet him. One of their principal demands of the sovereign was the surrender of Arnold of Brescia into the hands of the pontifical officers. It suited Frederic's immediate political purposes to grant this demand. Arnold was apprehended, conveyed to Rome, fixed to a stake and burnt to death ; his ashes being thrown into the Tiber, lest his devoted followers might collect them, as relics more precious in their eyes than those which the church had itself treasured.

Bernard did not survive to see the end of Arnold's career. Sternly as he had opposed every species of heresy, and every movement in a contrary direction to that of the dominant church, he had never permitted his zeal to tempt him into justifying any act of barbarity. Banishment, or confinement in a monastery, appears to have been the highest penalty which he ever desired to see inflicted upon those, whose opinions might be harmful to the cause which was so sacred in his eyes.

The last days of this venerable man were passed at Clairvaux. A heavy sickness preyed upon his frame, and

he could scarcely move from his couch. On one occasion, indeed, by that wonderful force of soul which the desire of doing good could always rouse into action, he found strength to leave his bed, and make a journey to Treves, where his presence and prayers availed to quiet a dispute between the archbishop and the people, which had long proved injurious to the diocese. On his return from this expedition, he prepared himself for his daily-expected dissolution. His hours were divided between the practice of devotion, and the composition of his celebrated work on "Consideration." But his sufferings increased as end drew nearer. They were unsoothed by the slightest interval of repose; and he could only comfort himself with the thought that he had a Redeemer through whose merits "all things work together for good to them that love God: to them that are the called according to his purpose." In a letter which he sent to his friend, the abbot of Bonneval, he said, "Intreat that Saviour who willeth not the death of a sinner, not to delay, but still to guard my departure. Aid me by your prayers, for I have no merits of my own, that the enemy of our salvation may find no place open where he may fix his tooth, or inflict a wound."* The moment of deliverance at length arrived, his meek dependence upon the merits of the one only Redeemer and Saviour, affording an edifying contrast to the proud doctrine of human sufficiency. It was this which rendered the name of Saint Bernard so dear to those whose hope of salvation was derived from the gospel alone, which gave him, during his long career, such a superiority to men like Abelard; and which seems to

* "Curate munire votis calcaneum nudum meritis, ut is qui insidiatur invenire non possit unde figat dentem, et vulnus infligat."—S. Bernardi Vita. anc. alano. Op. t. ii. p. 172.

have been almost the only thing wanting to render the concluding passages in the history of the latter as edifying as the end of Bernard's.

The death of a man like the abbot of Clairvaux would, at any time, have been a loss to the world. But it was especially so at the period when it took place. He has been popularly spoken of as the last of the fathers. But he was more to his age than that which is implied in this title. His influence was felt in every class of society. Strife-loving spirits were silenced by his rebukes, or his persuasions; he opposed the power of holiness to the corruptions favoured by the tendencies of the age; and though his long-formed habits of thought, his state and circumstances, naturally rendered him the opponent of those who openly desired a reformation, he did, in reality, by the power of his persuasion, sanctified and elevated by the grace which he ever sought from heaven, retard the progress of a sensual and worldly system, and convince those who were awake to the voice of divine truth, that it is truth alone, whatever be the system under which it is presented, that can render men wise or good. Bernard, in short, was one of the few men whose own spirits are so thoroughly imbued with the grace of holiness as to enable them to work beneficially upon the minds of others, not according to the narrow measure of their positive knowledge, but according to the fulness and power of heavenly grace.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS—CONFLICTING PRINCIPLES—WALDENSES
—DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY—CHURCH IN THE EAST.

LITTLE instruction can be derived from a dry catalogue of names, or from a summary of events, which may either have been unattended by any important results, or which may be of a kind requiring an investigation not fitted to the object in view. We shall, therefore, mention only such of the Roman pontiffs, and other great men of the following centuries, as contributed to give a particular bias to the age in which they appeared. So, also, with regard to events. It will be sufficient for our purpose to speak of those which really affected the state of the church, and religion, and the consequences of which were seen in the improved, or deteriorated state of the Christian community.

Before the end of the twelfth century, the Roman church had become the recognised centre of Christendom. It had acquired this prominent position by a concurrence of circumstances, all tending to depress the power of other states and churches, by isolating them from each other, while they were taught to regard Rome as the common mother of all. The acknowledged antiquity of that church; the ability of many of its prelates; its peculiar relations to the empire both in the East and in the West; the disposition of mankind, especially in periods of darkness and confusion, to cling to any institution which

offers a rallying-point; all these circumstances may be viewed as having materially contributed to secure for Rome that eminence and authority to which it laid claim on other, and more theoretical, pretensions.

The emperor Frederic Barbarossa by reasserting the dignity of the crown, threatened the popes with the loss of some portion of that grandeur which they had been gradually acquiring since the time of Gregory VII. Such was the force of the maxims which were now current respecting the divine origin of ecclesiastical authority, that neither the turbulence of the Roman people, nor the dissensions among the clergy themselves, so frequently leading to disputed elections, had been sufficient to prevent the growth of pontifical power. Frederic, however, had both more energy and more political wisdom than his predecessors. When he arrived in Rome, Adrian approached him with mingled fear and haughtiness. It was expected that Frederic would perform the act of homage, which it had now become usual for the temporal sovereign to render to the head of the church. But Adrian looked in vain for the emperor to make the customary obeisance, and to come to his side, and hold his stirrup while he dismounted his horse. Not being thus honoured, he left the emperor to wonder at his precipitate retreat; nor was it till the courtiers of Frederic had persuaded him to regard the vain ceremony as an act, which he might well afford to perform for the sake of peace, that the Roman people dare think themselves safe from a sanguinary conflict.

Adrian's subsequent conduct was little favourable to the peace of the church. He trampled on the rights of kings with a species of tyrannous contempt even more insulting than that of Hildebrand. In an interview which

his legate, Cardinal Roland, had with the emperor in his own court, the haughty ambassador openly asked, "From whom has the emperor the empire, if not from the pope?" The count palatine, Otho of Wittelsbach, who held at the moment the sword of state in his hand, yielding to the indignant feeling which inspired him, raised the formidable weapon, and would have let it fall upon the cardinal's neck, had not one of the attendants suddenly seized his arm. To the German prelates, the whole affair was fraught with the most painful consequences. They desired to show their reverence for the pontiff, but they would not violate the duty which they owed their sovereign. When the pope reproached them for their conduct, they replied with equal firmness and dignity: "Two regulations have been established among us; and according to them must the state be governed; the laws of the emperors, and the good customs of our forefathers. These limits we neither will nor can transgress. To our father, the pope, we will readily pay the homage which we owe him; but the imperial crown is independent; and we ascribe its possession to divine goodness alone."

A brief interval of peace only occurred between this dispute and the death of Adrian, in 1159. Italy exhibited a deplorable spectacle of war and civil dissension. The Milanese had long employed their power in oppressing the neighbouring cities; and Frederic marched against them with an army, consisting of a hundred thousand infantry, and fifteen thousand cavalry. No sooner had he crossed the Alps than the Milanese sent to implore his clemency. He listened favourably to their appeal; but scarcely had he agreed to spare the city, on its promised return to allegiance, when his ministers and ambassadors, whom he had sent to Milan, were treated with

the most insulting violence. Fired with indignation, he now made a solemn vow, that he would never put the imperial crown upon his head again, till he had destroyed the city.

Three years were occupied in the war with the Milanese, and it ended with the destruction of Milan, and the expulsion of its numerous inhabitants. Adrian, however, was of too stern a temper to be terrified into humbling himself even before so victorious a sovereign as Frederic. He continued to use the same lofty language; and it was his death only which delivered the emperor from so determined an antagonist.

The election of Alexander the Third was attended with disgusting turbulence. Octavian, another pretender to the dignity, tore the pontifical robe from his shoulders, and, putting it on his own, proclaimed himself the rightful successor of Saint Peter. The emperor rejoiced in the opportunity of exercising his power in such a controversy. Having summoned a council at Pavia, he treated the cardinals who appeared as the representatives of Alexander, with open contempt. The result of the proceedings was the acknowledgment of Octavian, under the title of Victor III., as the head of the church. Thus a new schism was created; and it was continued even after the death of Victor, Frederic then securing the election of another anti-pope, who assumed the name of Pascal III. A sanguinary conflict which took place in Rome itself, between the Romans and the imperial troops, was followed by a pestilence, which added to the general confusion. Raynald, archbishop of Cologne, and the emperor's chancellor, four other bishops, eight dukes, and a vast number of nobles, fell victims to the plague; and the general exclamation was, that God had thus stretched out

his hand to punish the emperor for the injury done to Saint Peter's and the other sacred edifices in the city. Frederic saw the danger to which he was exposed; and, victorious as he had been, was obliged to escape into Germany, under the cover of a disguise. Peace was at length established between him and pope Alexander; and the world had reason to hope that by the union of two such men, the highest interests of the church and society might be permanently promoted. But soon after the death of Alexander, other causes of dispute were created by his successors, and though they produced no formidable agitation, the progress of those better sentiments which were beginning to be cherished, was checked and discouraged. Frederick himself perished in an expedition to the Holy Land. Advanced as he was in years, he retained his youthful fire and vigour. The army which he led had reached the banks of the river Cydnus. He might have passed the stream by means of a bridge; but he could not brook delay, and spurring his charger, he plunged into the water, regardless of the force of the current. For some time he bore bravely up against the stream. At last, his horse was overpowered by its violence, and his agonized veterans beheld from the bank their old victorious commander borne helpless down the stream.

Political events were intimately connected, through the whole of the period designated as the middle ages, with the state and progress of the church. This may be accounted for by the fact, that each of the two great powers regarded itself as the rival of the other, and as having some vital interest to support which could not be preserved without the subjugation of its antagonist. Here was the error of Hildebrand, and his imperial rival;

and to the same cause may be attributed the fatal mistake committed by so many succeeding popes and emperors. Could they but have been induced to consider sedately the nature of the trusts with which they were respectively charged; could they have been taught the indisputable truth, that as there may be many circles with one centre, so there may be systems temporal and spiritual, radiating from one point, and harmonizing with each other by the relations of a common utility; they might then have also learnt, that their real power would be advanced by the success of the divine plan in which it originated; and that whatever retarded that, was, in the very nature of things, injurious to their own dignity and glory.

Frederic's son and successor, Henry, was a proud, arbitrary, and ungenerous prince. It was he who retained as a prisoner our brave Richard, the Lion-hearted, in the fortress of Triebs; and his general conduct was calculated to inspire not only his own people, but Europe at large, with the profoundest hatred of his conduct. His death, which occurred in 1197, left the throne to be occupied by his son Frederic, then only eight years old. This afforded the turbulent spirits of Germany and Italy a favourable opportunity for reviving their schemes. Innocent III. saw with pleasure the election of rival emperors; and Otho IV., by styling himself king of Rome, "by the grace of God, and the pope," obtained the pontiff's favour, and the splendid formality of a coronation. But Otho soon grew tired of such a vassalage, and Frederic was, in due time, allowed peaceable possession of his imperial rights. At his coronation in Aix-la-Chapelle, and again when the ceremony was repeated at Rome, in 1220, he promised to take part in a new crusade. The cares,

however, of his state would not allow him to fulfil the vow which he had made; and he was, therefore, compelled to obtain of the popes a temporary dispensation. Innocent III. had sought by every means in his power to induce the emperors to engage in an expedition to the holy land. That ambitious pontiff contemplated the complete subjection of kings and princes to his sway. John of England, and Philip of France, had felt the full weight of his anathemas; and the tyranny which he sought to exercise over sovereigns he employed against his own brethren, it being the fundamental maxim of his system, that all bishops were, at best, but the vicars of the Roman pontiff.

Nothing could be better calculated to aid the establishment of principles like these, than the renewal of the crusades. The passions which such undertakings inspired, disposed men to submit implicitly to the supposed demands of religion, whatever the form they assumed. Innocent, whose abilities were equal to his pride and ambition, was well aware of this, and could see clearly the advantages to be derived from engaging the emperor, and other princes, in an attempt to restore the declining kingdom of Jerusalem. Honorius, who succeeded him, had the same desire to aggrandize the church, but not the same temper, or the same determination; and Frederic was still able to elude the obligations of his vow. On the accession, however, of Gregory IX., he found his position daily becoming more difficult. The new pontiff threatened with ecclesiastical censures those who had assumed the cross, but delayed to fulfil the promise of embarking for the holy land. Frederic was at this time in bad health, and he pleaded his sickness as a sufficient reason for further indulgence. Gregory refused to be-

lieve the assertions of the monarch, and immediately pronounced against him a sentence of excommunication.

This was the commencement of a dispute which for the length of time which it continued, and for its lamentable consequences, was one of the saddest of those created by the rivalry of the church and the state. Gregory was far advanced in years, but the violence of his acts almost exceeded that of Hildebrand, or Innocent. He not only fulminated his anathemas against the emperor, but he laid his dominions under an interdict, freed his subjects from their oath of allegiance, and raised an army to invade his territories. When Frederic, in fulfilment of his vow, departed for Palestine, no change was produced in the conduct of the pontiff. He still preserved his hostile position; attacked Apulia with his forces, and sought to unite the several European princes in a general invasion of the imperial domains.

Whatever might have been Frederic's original intentions with regard to the holy land, it was manifestly his duty to hasten back to the defence of his kingdom.* He accordingly established a truce with Saladin, and returned with all speed to Europe. In a campaign against the papal forces in Sicily and Italy, he gained a succession of victories which alarmed even Gregory himself. He made overtures of peace. Frederic readily listened to his offers; a reconciliation was effected, and the ban under which the emperor and his subjects had so long been placed, was solemnly annulled.

But Gregory had not gained the triumph for which he

* Frederic recovered Jerusalem and some other cities which had fallen into the hands of the Saracens, and was himself crowned king of Jerusalem. Gregory's malice had pursued him even to Palestine, and the army and clergy were forbidden to obey him.—Kohlrausch.

had employed so many arts. Indignant at the notion of defeat, he soon resumed his insulting conduct towards the emperor. The anathema was repeated; war again proclaimed; and a plan laid for rendering Frederic an object of fear and hatred to the whole Christian world. Gregory considered that if he could induce a large body of cardinals and bishops to meet in solemn council, and to agree with him in a sentence of deposition against the emperor, the awe excited in men's minds by the decree of a synod, agreeing with his own anathemas, would blight for ever the name of the imperial offender.

Frederic heard of the pontiff's proceedings with equal anger and contempt. He took immediate measures to assert his power, and to punish his enemies for their unworthy machinations. The bishops upon whom Gregory chiefly depended for the success of his scheme were to assemble at Genoa, and proceed to Rome by sea. Frederic delighted in satire, and was one of the cleverest humourists of his age. His very habits of mind, therefore, would have led him to rejoice at the opportunity of humbling his adversaries, and exposing them, at the same time, to ridicule. The pope had now furnished him with just such an occasion for the exercise of his ingenuity as he desired. By sending a vessel well armed to intercept the one on which the bishops were aboard, he effectually prevented the success of their plans. No resistance was offered to the attack made upon them. They quietly allowed themselves to be made prisoners, and Frederic had the satisfaction to see his intended judges safely lodged in one of his strongest fortresses.

This was a cruel disappointment to the aged pontiff. He saw his most hopeful scheme overthrown by the prudence of the emperor, and ridicule thrown upon the plans

which he had framed with such care and perseverance. He had now attained, it is said, near his hundredth year; but he had strength enough left to feel the agonies of defeated ambition. He heard of what had taken place with a paroxysm of rage; and soon after fell into a state of lethargy from which he never recovered.

It might have been hoped that the death of this haughty and ambitious pontiff would lead to the restoration of tranquillity. But his successor, Innocent IV., had imbibed the same unhappy notion, that the interests of the church required the humiliation of the temporal power. The same mistrust, therefore, continued to prevail between the two parties, and the pontiff hastening to Lyons, dared to summon Frederic to appear before a council in that city. Some delay was desired on the part of the monarch. Fourteen days were allowed him; but he then announced that he considered it unbecoming his dignity to answer before such a tribunal; and sentence was immediately pronounced against him as a heretic and church-robber. Frederic's courtiers and ministers were terrified at the sound of the anathemas hurled against their master. But he himself regarded them with contempt, and called upon the princes of the empire to free themselves from such an intolerable yoke. Innocent treated these movements on the part of the emperor, in the same manner as the latter had treated his own anathemas. Both continued to preserve the attitude of defiance, till death, in 1250, removed Frederic from the scene of strife. Innocent survived him about four years. The succeeding pontiffs were less turbulent or ambitious; and it was not till 1271, when Gregory X. ascended the papal throne, that the progress of ecclesiastical power again attracted general attention. Gregory

renewed the loftiest pretensions of his renowned predecessor of the same name. He proclaimed himself, as supreme pontiff, lord of all states and kingdoms; and thus, when the German princes hesitated about the choice of an emperor, he addressed them in a letter, in which he declared, that if they deferred any longer the election of a sovereign, he would elect one for them.

The successors of this pontiff, when not prevented by the infirmities of old age, or a natural indisposition for political strife, pursued the same plans for the aggrandizement of their order. In 1292 the throne was left vacant by the death of Nicolas IV., and near three years elapsed before the factious cardinals could agree on the choice of his successor. They at length determined to exalt an aged ascetic, Peter di Murrone, to the splendid eminence. No one, perhaps, could have been found more fitted by his sanctity to gain respect for the pontificate, or less able or disposed to advance the views of his ambitious advisers. His elevation produced no effect upon his long-formed habits of devout self-denial. Nothing could induce him to live otherwise than as an ascetic; and his demeanour and conversation presented a curious contrast to those of the proud, licentious ecclesiastics who crowded to his court.

It required but a few months to convince the cardinals, who had raised the aged Celestine to the throne, that as long as he retained the dignity, their most favourite schemes must continue in abeyance. Weary of the cares and disgusts which he had to endure, the aged pontiff himself sighed for the solitude from which he had been forced. It was with a ready ear, therefore, that he listened to the advice which was given him to resign the throne. In less than four months after his election, he

abdicated the papacy, and the cardinal, Benedict Cajetan, who had been the foremost among those who advised the resignation of the venerable Celestine, was elected his successor. He assumed the title of Boniface VIII. The doubts entertained by a powerful party respecting the abdication of the late pope, were confirmed by an appeal to the canon law. But Boniface despised both the rank and the arguments of his opponents. The family of Colonna in vain endeavoured to chastise his insolence. He attacked their possessions; levelled their favourite town of Palestrina with the dust; and compelled as many as bore the name, and fell into his hands, to perform the most humiliating acts of submission. Some, however, of the family escaped, and hastening into France, they excited Philip the Fair, already sufficiently hostile to Rome, to threaten Boniface with all the terrors of a general council. The indignation which his conduct to the Colonna had inspired, was deepened by the reports of his treatment of the aged and saint-like Celestine. Alarmed at the notion to which his own imagination only had given birth, that the venerable man might desire to reascend the abdicated throne, he put him into close confinement; set persons to watch his actions, and catch any expression of returning ambition which might fall from his lips. In this manner he kept him prisoner, till a peaceful death relieved him from the persecution to which he was so unjustly exposed.

The hour of retribution arrived in due time. King Philip had resolved that Boniface should appear before the proposed council. He accordingly sent his chancellor, William of Nogaret, into Italy, to summon him with all the solemnity proper to so high an occasion. Nogaret was devoted to his sovereign, but a man of violent tem-

per, and ill calculated to perform an office like that with which he was intrusted. Boniface had retired to his country-seat at Anagni. Thither the chancellor led his retinue of armed attendants. Their war-cry as they entered the peaceful town was, "Long live king Philip, and death to pope Boniface." The unhappy pontiff at once felt that his doom was sealed. Summoning his servants, he clad himself in his robes of state, and putting the tiara on his head, and taking the cross, and the keys, in his hand, he ascended the pontifical chair. He was found thus seated by Nogaret and his followers. Some members of the Colonna family were present, and after a fierce altercation, Boniface was delivered as a prisoner into the hands of the soldiers, who formed part of the chancellor's retinue. He remained under their guard for three days. The inhabitants of Anagni then rose tumultuously to effect his deliverance. They succeeded in overpowering the French, and the pontiff making his escape hastened to Rome. But he had suffered more than his haughty spirit could bear; and he died broken-hearted, while taking measures to avenge himself upon Philip and his ministers.

Boniface was succeeded by Benedict XI., and the king of France had the good policy to send immediately to the new pontiff to demand absolution for the offences which he had committed against his predecessor. Benedict had no desire to continue the dispute, and instantly granted the pardon required. But so placable a temper was not likely to meet with many admirers in the then state of the Roman court. Benedict died after a pontificate of eight months, and it was commonly believed of poison.

While such were the events which took place in the

church, as viewed in its common and outward relations to the world, the power of the Holy Spirit was wonderfully exercised in the defence and furtherance of the gospel. It ought not to be doubted, but that in the midst of the most agitated provinces of the visible church, there were men in true communion with Christ; men whose souls eagerly thirsted for more knowledge, for purer means of grace, and a higher degree of spiritual liberty, than the age in which they lived allowed. A corrupt clergy, turbulent times, and the increase of superstition, may all so work to the debasement of churches, as to deprive them of their noblest features. But the relation in which the individual members of these churches stand to the Saviour, the sovereign and everlasting head of the universal church, is not necessarily destroyed by the unfaithfulness, the corruption, or agitation of the communities to which they belong. Known to Christ, as living members of his mystical body, they may still be sanctified by his grace, and so be preserved from darkness and reprobation in the midst of the most degraded masses of professing Christians.

But the testimony which believers so circumstanced can render to the power of divine truth is obtained with difficulty. It is only when they are collected in distinct companies; when events have tended to make them known to each other as witnesses to the gospel, that the record of their struggles and confessions can be made available to the purposes of religious history.

The Waldenses were early placed in a position like that alluded to. Though not necessarily separated from communion with the Roman church, they were driven to examine well their own position as Christians, and to provide for their spiritual defence and nourishment

out of the resources which they could find in the gospel itself.

Claude, archbishop of Turin, who lived in the times of Charlemagne, and of Louis the Debonaire, promoted a system both of doctrine and discipline in striking opposition to the peculiar tendencies of the dominant churches. He combated the use of images, the invocation of saints, pilgrimages, and the supremacy of the popes.* The influence which Claude had exercised, was long felt throughout the districts which formed his extensive diocese. They remained faithful to the principles of that simple evangelical faith which it was his object to establish among them. During the gloom of the next two centuries, they lost, it is probable, some portion of that intelligence and exalted spirituality which distinguished them in the time of their apostolic bishop. The age was one of singular darkness, and it is hardly to be supposed that the valleys of Piedmont could wholly escape the influence of such a general decline and corruption. But the strongest evidence exists to show, that the people of this district retained, throughout the worst times, a knowledge of evangelical doctrine, which was sufficient to defend them against the prevalent superstitions of other churches.

In the twelfth century, new vigour was imparted to the religious communities of the Vaudois, by the accession of Peter Waldo, and his followers, to their party. Waldo was a rich citizen of Lyons. In the year 1175, he disposed of his possessions, and devoting himself to the service of divine truth, began a translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue. Not confining himself

* Leger. *Histoire Generale des Eglises Vaudoises*.—p. 137.

to this species of labour, he discoursed to the people in the streets, on the principal doctrines of the gospel; and, in order to prove that that which he taught them was not contrary to the faith of the early church, he translated passages from the fathers, and continued his efforts till he had convinced a vast number of his hearers, that the church of Rome had renounced the pure doctrine of Christ; that purgatory, the mass, the worship of saints, and prayers for the dead, were unholy inventions; and that it was the duty of all, in regard to religion, to obey God, and not man.

Waldo was soon made to feel the effects of the indignation which his preaching had excited in the church. The ruling ecclesiastics rose against him; and he with difficulty escaped from their hands. To what country, or province he directed his steps is uncertain. It is probable, however, that the earlier part of his career, on leaving Lyons, was spent among the brethren of the Piedmontese valleys. With them he would enjoy that communion of which even the boldest spirits feel the need in times of trial; and from their enlightened and experienced teachers he might learn to correct what was extravagant in his views, or to enlarge his system of doctrine according to the measure of the gospel.

But Waldo appears to have passed only a small portion of his life among the Vaudois. He travelled into the Low Countries; traversed a considerable part of Germany, and then pursued his journey into Bohemia, where he is said to have converted a considerable number of the people, leading them to a far clearer knowledge of the spiritual nature of Christianity, than that which they originally possessed. It is evident, indeed, even from the slight notices which exist of his labours and wanderings,

that he followed with unwavering fortitude, what he believed to be the pure teaching of the gospel. Even allowing for the errors incidental to a state of powerful excitement, and constant antagonism, the doctrines which he sought to inculcate embodied the saving truths of evangelical religion; and it was the fundamental principle of his system, that every human addition to these truths,—that the pomps and ceremonies which it was supposed might render them more acceptable to mankind, could only tend to the corruption of the gospel, or to the darkening of the light, which it was the especial ministerial duty of the church to keep clear and shining.

Waldo had no desire to take the part of a schismatic, or to separate himself unnecessarily from communion with Rome. At the beginning of his course, he earnestly endeavoured to conciliate the pope and his advisers, by submitting to their judgment his translations of Scripture, and a proposal to establish an order of missionaries, or preachers for the poor. There was then at Rome an Oxford divine, Walther Mapes, a man of learning, but too proud to suppose, for a moment, that anything wise or good could be found in a simple ingenuous mind, unaided by the powers of scholastic logic. Not discovering, therefore, in Waldo's writings the traces of any profound subtlety, he spoke with contempt of his pretensions, and advised the pope to refuse him that authority which he was so anxious to obtain to form a religious society.

Considering the facilities which were commonly rendered, in these times, for the establishment of monastic orders, it appears to have been as impolitic, as it was tyrannical, on the part of the Roman court, to deny the privilege to such a man as the rich and devout citizen of Lyons. By contemptuously rejecting his offers, to devote

himself to the work of the gospel, and the church, they compelled him to make choice between the service of man and the service of God, or between the obedience which he owed to human authority, and that which was claimed of him by the teaching of the divine word, by the dictates of his conscience, and, as he had reason to believe, by the motions of the Holy Spirit. It has often been the error of those placed in high offices in the church, to act thus towards men, endowed with noble gifts of grace, and admirably calculated by the natural vigour of their mental constitution, to render the most valuable services to religion. Happily for the world, ecclesiastical pride and folly have generally provided a scourge for themselves by this wretched blindness to the interests of holiness. The men whom they have treated with insufferable haughtiness, and loaded with injuries and calumnies, have been rendered thereby more determined enemies to that corruption which is the sole support of undue authority,—the sole defence of those systems, under the shadow of which the resources of churches, actually poor, have been exhausted to pamper the inconsiderate, if not the wicked, selfishness of their chiefs.

It is a curious and interesting fact, that Innocent III., violent as he was in his views of papal authority, saw clearly that mischief had been done by the conduct pursued towards the Waldenses, or the poor men of Lyons, as the followers of Waldo were now generally called. The return of Durandus de Osca, one of the preachers, to communion with Rome, furnished Innocent with the required information on this important matter. He discovered that far more was to be feared from these men, out of the church, than would have to be apprehended from

them, in the church. So convinced was he of this, that he proposed to constitute them as an order of ministers, whose duty it should be to explain the doctrines of the faith, and to attend upon the poor and sick. But there were two fatal obstacles to this scheme. On the one side, the evangelical principles which the Waldenses taught had now taken too deep a hold of their hearts to allow of their compromising any particle of the truth, or veiling it under any form which might obscure its lustre. On the other, the sound policy of Innocent was not understood by those around him. He received no encouragement to persevere in his design, and it accordingly proved abortive.

Thus the Waldenses were left in their state of alienation from the dominant church. They were not responsible for the evils of their separation. The original claims of their founder were adverse to no proper law or privilege of ecclesiastical government; and could the church, which had denied them communion, have humbled itself sufficiently to examine its own condition, and reform what was indisputably unscriptural, and unspiritual, they might have been still brought back into its bosom, with all the supplies of fresh life and vigour, which they had drawn from the fountains of divine truth.

One of the unhappy consequences of the failure of Innocent's scheme, was an increased irritation, on the part of the Roman hierarchy, against all classes of disputants or reformers. While it would be difficult, so it would be of little use, to show in what minute particulars the Albigenses,* the Vaudois, and Waldenses, differed from

* The Albigenses derived their appellation from the little city of Albi, in the district of Albigeois, in the south of France. It formed part of the territory belonging to Raymond, count of Tholouse.

each other. They may properly be regarded under one head, as united in opposing the tyrannous superstition of the dominant church. Their system of doctrine was characterized by the same earnest wish of its supporters to abide by the gospel, and to prove the sufficiency of what it reveals, and bestows, for all the purposes of sanctifying and saving the soul.

The persecutions, therefore, endured by any of these evangelical Christians, may be regarded as directed against the whole, and as proving the growing hostility of Rome to the principles which they advocated. An occurrence unfortunately took place in the year 1208, which afforded a plea for increasing the severity of the measures already prepared for the suppression of the hated sectaries. Peter of Castelnau having been sent, as papal legate, into the territories of the count of Tholouse, exercised his power against the Albigenses with unexampled cruelty. The unhappy people, however, bore his barbarous treatment in a manner answerable to their Christian character and patience. But his conduct was watched by other eyes; and he expiated his crimes at the hand of some unknown assassin.

No time was lost in avenging the death of this devoted servant of the church. The count of Tholouse, Raymond VI., was charged with the crime; and Arnold, abbot of Citeaux, a furious zealot, gladly undertook the task of summoning the faithful to lay waste his dominions with fire and sword. An army was soon raised. It consisted of men blindly devoted to the will of their leader, and they were honoured with the name and privi-

The Vaudois are supposed to have been so named from the valleys which they inhabited; while the Waldenses, often confounded with them, were so called from their founder.

leges of crusaders. The count was compelled to the alternative of surrendering his territory, or abandoning his unfortunate subjects to their persecutors. He chose the latter course, but soon repented of his cowardice, as impolitic as unworthy. When he resumed the attitude of defiance, he was less sure of the attachment of his people. Town after town was taken by the crusaders. Their rage was inflamed by victory. When Beziers opened its gates to them, their thirst for blood had for the moment to remain unsatisfied, while some attempt was made to determine which of the inhabitants were Catholics, and which sectaries. Finding, however, that this would be a difficult task, the legate exclaimed, "Begin to slay, begin to slay! The Lord knows who are his."

Simon de Montfort, who had occupied the highest post in the crusading army, received as his reward the confiscated territories of Raymond. The latter subsequently recovered a portion of his possessions, and they descended to his son. But a new attack was made upon the district, and the prince was reduced to the condition of a vassal of the French crown.

Sad as was the fate of the counts of Tholouse, that of their subjects was far worse. Not content with the miseries which had been inflicted by the war waged against them, the court of Rome determined to create an order of inquisitors, whose especial duty it should be to discover heretics, and decide upon their punishment. The famous Saint Dominic was placed at the head of the new institution. He had long been distinguished for the severity of his character, and his stern devotion to the rules of his monastic profession. To commit the office of inquisitor to such a man, was itself sufficiently indicative of the temper of the Roman court. Dominic transmitted

both his principles and his dispositions to his order. Its members were constituted perpetual inquisitors by a decree of Gregory IX. passed in 1232. Their operations were soon extended far beyond the valleys of Piedmont or Dauphiny; and the annals which record their crimes against justice, humanity, and truth, can only be regarded as having any connexion with the history of the church, as the church itself may be supposed to have fallen, from time to time, under the power of delusion. Truth compels the acknowledgment, that there was nothing in the constitution of the Roman church, properly considered, which could identify the principles of the inquisition with those of the church itself. It had its origin in the tyranny and folly of individuals. Unhappy circumstances, and more particularly the darkness of the ages which immediately succeeded its establishment, favoured its progress. In the course of a century its real character and origin were forgotten; it was allowed to exercise the highest powers of the church, as its supposed executive organ; and the Roman church thus rendered itself chargeable for crimes which, as a church, it could never have committed, however sternly it had adhered to its essential laws and constitutions.

But while considerations of this kind may tend to correct our views, as to the real principles of the dominant church of the middle ages, they are calculated to impress us with a feeling of profound dread, lest mankind should ever again be placed in a state in which either churches, or temporal governments, should be able to employ such ministers of their wrath and tyranny. One of the strongest proofs that could possibly be given of the indisposition of any church, even in the darkest periods, to adopt the principles of the inquisition, is the fact, that

the Roman hierarchy dare not take upon themselves the responsibility of inflicting capital punishment, in the case even of the worst heretics. An especial rule was instituted, directing the supposed offender to be delivered over to the temporal power. When banishment, or death, therefore, was assigned as the fitting penalty of heresy, it was not the church, but the magistrate, who inflicted the punishment. This, it is true, was but to add the crime of an odious hypocrisy to that of a barbarous tyranny; but still the truth was proclaimed, that the ministers of a church, which they had reduced to the lowest state of corruption, dare not pretend that, as a church, it had the right to punish those who separated from its communion. Important, however, as is this fact, as showing the distinction between the policy of a church, at a particular period, and the proper character, or fundamental laws of that church, it teaches us, at the same time, that no church which estimates its own purity and worth at their fair price, will ever allow itself to assume the right of a dictator to the consciences of men, or to forget, that the sole authority with which it is intrusted is ministerial and pastoral.

Of the sufferings of the Waldenses even their enemies have spoken with sufficient clearness. We find that they were subjected to every species of torture which the most savage hatred could invent. Neither age nor sex made any difference in the treatment to which they were exposed; and were it not of importance that we should have distinct evidence of what actually took place in such times, we might be disposed to regret that their annalists have filled the pages of history with details so horrible and appalling.

The fortitude with which the Waldenses, and their

brethren, endured the terrors of persecution, is proved by evidence as clear as that which determines the amount of their sufferings. It was no mere system of opinions for which they contended. The gospel had been handed down to them from their forefathers; they had felt the power of its ministrations, and they desired to leave the same rich inheritance to their children, and their children's children. No sacrifice seemed too great when such a treasure had to be saved; and the persecutors fought against a people whom no sufferings could subdue, while there was present to their thoughts the grandeur of the prize for which they were putting forth their strength.

Had we no other proof of the existence of two very opposite sets of religious principles in the world, at the period of which we are speaking, the simple record of the Waldensian persecution would be sufficient. There must have been something of a most startling character in the theology of the ecclesiastical system, which could excite a humble and virtuous people, like the Vaudois, to resist its introduction among them with such determined hostility. So, too, it is equally plain, that their own profession must have had a life and power in it, unlike any which could have been derived from artificial sources, or was fitted to be blended with human inventions.

Some few documents still exist from which we are able to determine the general character of the principles cherished by the persecuted people.* Thus in a brief exposition of doctrine, setting forth the main points of their belief, we read, under the head of the Lord's Prayer, "Saint Augustine being requested by a spiritual daugh-

* *Histoire des Chrestiens Albigeois*, par Jean P. Perrin, p. 201. Perrin's *History of the Old Waldenses and Albigenes*.—London, 1712, b. v. c. iii. p. 134.

ter of his, to teach her to pray, said, 'A multitude of words is not necessary in prayer. But to pray much is to be fervent in prayer; and, therefore, to be long in prayer, is to present things necessary in superfluous words. To pray much, is to solicit that for which we pray with propriety and affection of heart; or with tears, which are better than words; for God who seeth the secrets of our hearts, is more moved by a deep groan or sigh, with plaints and tears which come from the heart, than by a thousand words. But there are many in these days who resemble the pagans, to whom Christ would not have his disciples be like; for they think and believe, that they shall be the rather heard for their many words; whereby it comes to pass that they lose much time, under the pretence of prayer. Job saith, and experience makes it good, that a man is never long in the same estate in this life, but he is now disposed to do one thing, and presently to do another. And, therefore, there is no man who can keep his mind and spirit attentively occupied in prayer a whole day, or a whole night together, except God give the especial assistance of his grace. And if a man hath not his heart fixed upon that which he speaketh, he loseth his time, because he prays in vain, and his soul is troubled, and his mind wandereth another way. And, therefore, God hath appointed to his servants other exercises, virtuous, spiritual, corporeal, whercin a man may ordinarily exercise himself, sometimes in one, sometimes in another, either for his own or his neighbour's good, having his heart lifted up unto God, with all his power, that he may not be idle. And, therefore, that man who liveth well, according to the will of God, and the doctrine of his saints, prayeth always, for every good work is a prayer to God. And as for this thou readest,

know that all the prayers of the Old and New Testaments do agree with this, and that no prayer can be pleasing unto God, which hath not a reference, in some way or other, unto this. And, therefore, every Christian ought to apply himself to understand and learn this prayer, which Christ himself hath taught with his own mouth.

“ ‘Now it is necessary that he that is heard of God be agreeable unto him, and know those benefits which he hath received from him. For ingratitude is a wind which drieth up the fountain of the mercy and compassion of our God. And, therefore, if thou wilt pray, and ask anything at God’s hands, think with thyself, before thou ask, what, and how great, benefits thou hast received from Him; and if thou canst not call them all to mind, yet, at the least, beg for that grace, which may give thee boldness to call him Father. And think, and know, in how divers a manner he is thy Father. For He is the Father of all creatures in general, He having created them all. He is a Father by distribution; for He hath ordained them all, and disposed them all in their due places, as being very good. By preservation; for He hath preserved all creatures, that, they fail not in their kind, among which his creatures, thou art one. And, besides: He is the Father of mankind by redemption, for He hath bought them with the precious blood of His Son, the Lamb without spot. By instruction, also; for He hath taught them by his prophets, by his Son, by his apostles and doctors, and that in divers manners, how they may return into paradise, whence we were driven by the sin of our first father, Adam. By chastisement; for He chastiseth and correcteth us in this life, to the end that we may seek his mercy, and so be saved from perishing everlastingly.’ ”

On the subject of the Sacraments, they wrote, "A sacrament, according to the saying of Saint Augustine, in his 'Book of the City of God,' is an invisible grace, represented by a visible thing. Or, a sacrament is a sign of a holy thing. There is a great difference between the sacrament, and the cause of the sacrament, even as much as between the sign, and the thing signified. For the cause of the sacrament is the divine grace, and the merit of Jesus Christ crucified, who is the raising of those that are falling. This cause of the sacrament is powerfully, essentially, and authoritatively, in God; and is in Jesus Christ meritoriously. For by the cruel passion and effusion of His blood, He hath obtained grace and righteousness unto all the faithful. But the reality of the sacrament is in the soul of the faithful, by participation, as Saint Paul speaketh: *We have been made partakers with Christ.* It is in the word of the gospel, by communication, or manifestation. In the sacraments, sacramentally; for the Lord Jesus hath lent, or given these helps of the outward sacraments, to the end, that ministers, instructing in the faith, should so accommodate themselves to human weakness, that they may the better edify the people by the word of the gospel."

And, further: "There are two sacraments. The one of *water*, the other of *nourishment*, that is to say, bread and wine. The former is called baptism, that is to say, in our language, the washing with water, either with the river or the fountain; and it must be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to the end, that first by means of the grace of God the Father, beholding his Son, and by the participation of Jesus Christ, who hath bought us, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which imprinteth a lively faith in our

hearts, the sins of those that are baptized are pardoned, and they received into grace, and afterwards, having persevered therein, are saved in Jesus Christ.

“The baptism wherewith we are baptized, is the same wherewith it pleased our Saviour himself to be baptized, *to fulfil all righteousness*, as it was his will to be circumcised, and wherewith he commanded his apostles to be baptized. The things that are not necessary in baptism, are the *exorcisms*, the breathings, the signs of the cross upon the infant, either on the breast, or the forehead, the salt put into the mouth, the spittle into the ears and nostrils, the unction of the breast, the monk’s cowl, the anointing of the chrism on the head, and divers the like things, consecrated by the bishop. As also, the putting of the taper in the child’s hands, clothing it with a white vestment, the blessing of the water, and the dipping of the infant thrice. All these things used in the administration of the sacrament are not necessary, they being neither of the substances, nor necessary to the efficacy of the right; but giving occasion to error and superstition, rather than edification unto salvation. Now this baptism is visible and material, making the party who receives it neither good nor evil, as appeareth in the Scripture, by Simon Magus and Saint Paul. And whereas, baptism is administered in a full congregation of the faithful, it is to the end, that he who is received into the church, should be reputed, and held of all, for a Christian brother, and that all the congregation may pray for him, that he may be a Christian in heart, as he is now outwardly esteemed one. And for this cause it also is, that we present our children in baptism, which ought to be done by those to whom the children are nearest, as their parents, and they to whom God hath given this charity.”

Of the same character is the exposition of the doctrine of the Lord's supper. "As baptism, which is taken visibly, is an enrolment into the number of faithful Christians, which carrieth in itself a protestation and promise to follow Christ Jesus, to keep his holy ordinances, and to live according to his gospel, so the holy supper and communion of our blessed Saviour, the breaking of bread, and the giving of thanks, is a visible communion made with the members of Jesus Christ. For they that take, and break, one and the same bread, are one and the same body, that is to say, the body of Jesus Christ. And they are members one of another, ingrafted and planted in Him to whom they protest and promise, to persevere in his service to their lives' end, never departing from the faith of the gospel, and the union which they have all promised by Jesus Christ. And, therefore, as all the members are nourished with one and the same viands, and all the faithful take one and the same spiritual bread, of the word of life, of the gospel of salvation, so they all live by one and the same spirit, and one and the same faith."

Again: "This sacrament was instituted by divine ordinance, perfectly to signify unto us the spiritual nourishment of man in God; by means whereof the spiritual life is preserved, and without which it decayeth. The truth itself saying, 'If you eat not the flesh of the Son of Man, nor drink his blood, there shall be no life in you.' Concerning which sacrament, we must hold that which followeth by the testimony of Scripture; that is, we must confess simply, and in purity of heart, that the bread which Christ took at his last supper; which he blessed, brake, and gave his disciples to eat; and by the reception of which at the hands of faithful pastors, he has left a memo-

rial of his passion, is in its nature true bread, and that by the pronoun *this*, is demonstrated the sacramental proposition, *This is my body*, not understanding these words identically, or of a numerical identity, but sacramentally; really and truly, but not measurably: this same body of Christ now sitting in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, and unto which every faithful receiver must lift up the eyes of his understanding, having his soul raised above, and so partaking of it, by a firm faith, spiritually and sacramentally. We must understand the same of the cup.”*

These views are supported by a reference to the fathers, whose testimony, especially that of Saint Augustine, was evidently held in high esteem by these early opponents of the superstitions of other churches. “Saint Augustine saith, that ‘the eating and drinking of this sacrament must be understood spiritually. For Christ saith, *The words that I speak are spirit and life.*’ And Saint Jerome saith, ‘The flesh of Christ is to be understood after a twofold manner, either spiritually, of which Christ saith, *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;* or it is to be understood of that flesh which was crucified and buried.’ Of the spiritual eating, Christ saith, ‘He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, is in me, and I in him.’ There is also a twofold manner of eating, one sacramental, and so both good and bad do eat; the other spiritual, and so the good only do eat. And, therefore, saith Saint Augustine, ‘What is it to eat Christ?’ It is not only to receive his body in the sacrament, for many do eat him unworthily, and who will, therefore, neither dwell in him, nor have him to dwell in them, but

* Perrin. Hist. des Albigeois, p. 214.

he eats him spiritually, who continueth in the truth of Christ. And, therefore, to eat the sacramental bread, is to eat the body of Christ in a figure, Jesus Christ himself saying, nevertheless, 'As oft as ye do this, ye shall do it in remembrance of me.' For if this eating were not in figure, Christ should be always bound to such a thing; for it is necessary that the spiritual eating should be continual; as Saint Augustine speaketh, 'He that eateth Christ in truth, is he that believeth in him;' for Christ saith, that to eat him, is to dwell in him. In the celebration of this sacrament, prayer is profitable, and the preaching of the word, in the vulgar tongue, and in a manner edifying and agreeable to the evangelical law; to the end that peace and charity may increase amongst the people. But other things which are in use in these days, in the church of Rome, and with those that are members thereof, belong not at all to the sacrament."

Of discipline, the founders of their church polity wrote, "Discipline contains in itself all moral doctrine, according to the institution of Christ and his apostles; showing after what manner every one ought to live in his vocation, by faith, and to walk worthily in true holiness and righteousness. There are many instructions in the book of God respecting this discipline, showing not only how every man ought to live in his own particular estate, of whatsoever age or condition he be; but also what must be that union, content and bond of love, in the communion of the faithful. And, therefore, if any man desire the knowledge of these things, let him read what the apostle hath said in his epistles, and he shall find it there set down at large. And especially in what manner every one is bound to keep himself in unity, and to walk in such sort, that he be not a scandal, and an occasion of

falling, to his neighbour, by wicked words and actions; and in what manner also he is bound, not only to flee what is itself evil, but the occasions of evil; and whensoever any man hath failed therein, how he may be reformed, and come to amendment of life. By many such general instructions, the reclaimed people, newly brought unto the faith, must be taught; to the end, that they may walk worthily in the house of the Lord, and not make it a den of thieves by their profane, wicked conversations, and toleration of evil.

In another article, we have an account of their pastors, and of the mode in which they were appointed and maintained. "All those who are to be received as pastors among us, while they are yet with their own people, are to entreat ours, that they would be pleased to receive them into the ministry, and to pray unto God that they may be made worthy of so great an office. And this they are to do to give thereby a proof and evidence of their humility. We also give them lessons, and make them learn by heart all the chapters of Saint Matthew and Saint John; and all the epistles, which are called canonical; together with a great part of the writings of Solomon, David, and the prophets. And afterwards, having produced good testimonials, they are admitted, with imposition of hands, to the office of preachers.

"He that is admitted in the last place is not allowed to do anything without licence from him who was admitted before; nor may he that is first do anything without the consent of his companion, that all things may be done in good order among us. Diet and apparel are given unto us freely, in the way of alms, and sufficiently, by the good people whom we teach. Amongst other powers which God hath conferred upon his servants, He

hath given them the right of choosing those who are to guide his people, and to constitute elders in their charges, according to the diversity of the work, in the unity of Christ; which is proved by the saying of the apostle, in the first chapter of his epistle to Titus: 'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee.' When any of us pastors, as we have described, fall into some grievous sin, he is expelled our company, and forbidden to preach."

In another article, it is again stated, that rulers and elders were chosen from among the people, according to the diversity of the work, in the unity of Christ. The money given by the people was carried to the general assembly of the faithful. It was then divided, part being given to those who were about to make a journey, to help them on their way; and part to the poor. The pastors were every year to call an assembly of the whole community, and in this assembly the matters which concerned the common interests of the people and their ministers were to be openly discussed, as in a general council.

Such were the principles cherished by the people, whom the great ecclesiastical powers of the middle ages regarded as fitting subjects for the most barbarous persecutions. But, unhappily for the credit of churches assuming to themselves the right of punishing those who question their purity, or resist their innovations, the conduct pursued against the Waldenses in periods of comparative darkness, was continued till long after those times had passed away. The inhabitants of the Piedmontese valleys were exposed in the age immediately preceding the Reformation, to treatment as cruel and tyrannical as that which they experienced in the thirteenth century.

But nothing could subdue them as a people devoted to the maintenance of simple evangelical truth. When the fury of their persecutors rendered it impossible for them to continue in their humble homes, they fled into other countries, bearing with them, wherever they went, indisputable proofs of their fidelity to the gospel, and frequently exciting others, who, wanting such witnesses to the truth, might ever have remained in darkness, to embrace the same pure and saving doctrines. Thus they were instrumental in preparing the way for the reformation in Bohemia, and in various parts of Germany. But even in these distant lands, they could not always escape the vigilance of the inquisition. They were pursued, seized, and committed to the flames; the civil power violating every principle of common sense and justice, by lending itself as a servile instrument to the wretched ministers of ecclesiastical rage.

It is appalling to reflect, that the progress of light and knowledge seemed to have little influence in correcting the fatal error of principle on which these persecutions were founded. The seventeenth century exhibited scenes in the valleys of Piedmont as awful as any represented in the gloomiest annals of the thirteenth and fourteenth. Such is the melancholy proof, that advancing civilization will not always afford an antidote to the poison of error and intolerance.

The knowledge of Christianity had been diffused over the greater part of Europe before the end of the tenth century. To a considerable extent, the people to whom it had been communicated remained faithful to its doctrines, as far as the instruction which they received could enable them to judge of their genuine character. But many of the northern provinces of Europe were still

involved in the gloom of heathenism. Russia, Poland, and Denmark had been partially converted, but the Scandinavians, and warlike Prussians had hitherto defied the efforts of the pious missionaries who laboured among them. The twelfth century was happily fruitful in the conversion of the northern nations. Otho, bishop of Bamberg, preached the gospel effectually to the Pomeranians, who had been obliged in the early part of the century to submit to the military power of Poland. Boleslaus, the victorious sovereign of that country, having himself learnt the worth of Christianity, made it a condition, that if he granted peace to the conquered people, they should hearken to the instructions of the pious men whom he sent among them. Waldemar I., king of Denmark, was inspired by a kindred feeling, and his numerous conquests proved of important service to the cause of the gospel. Other princes followed the example of these warriors, and thus before the end of the century, the Finlanders, the Livonians, and even the barbarous inhabitants of the island of Rugen, were brought into communion with the Christian church. The Livonians were conquered by a Saxon army, and a military order, formed for the purpose, at the instigation of Urban III., and led by monks, who successively became the bishops of the people whom they had subdued by force of arms.

In cases of this kind, we can only regard it as a wonderful instance of the power of God, and of the wisdom of his providence, that any permanent good was derived from the conversion of the conquered provinces. It is owned that horrible barbarities were committed before they could be forced to submit to the yoke; and it is plain, that the first impressions made on the minds of the

people by the teaching of such missionaries, must have been little in accordance with those which led the earlier Christian converts to exclaim, "What shall we do to be saved?" or, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Yet with all the evils and inconsistencies so easily discoverable in the wars of conversion, incalculable benefits resulted from their success. This was the work of Heaven. The vices, the hypocrisy, the error, which attended the confession of truths not known, or misunderstood, were the fruit of human wickedness and human folly.

The thirteenth century was distinguished by the forced conversion of the Prussians, compelled, mighty as they were in their barbarous strength, to own the superior force of the Teutonic knights. Other events also occurred which were considered as highly beneficial to the Christian cause. The Saracens who had long possessed the noblest provinces in Spain, were now rapidly yielding to the courage of the catholic princes. So, too, the more distant countries which had, from the earliest times, been regarded as the proper fields of missionary enterprise, gave proofs that they had not been forgotten in the general movement. Churches were established both in Tartary and China. The kingdom of Cathay, founded by the Nestorian priest, the far-famed Prester John, in the twelfth century, contributed to diffuse the knowledge of Christianity among countless tribes of barbarians. Unstable as such empires were, and little as we can now trace of their existence, they were a medium, among the other numberless provisions of divine goodness, for the diffusion of the light, and the means of grace, which were proportionable to the capacity of the times in which they existed.

Such was the state of affairs in the eastern empire, that the power of Christianity could only be discovered in the resistance which it offered to the growing corruptions of the age. Political freedom had long ceased to be known, or was only seen in some occasional protest made against the tyranny of imperial ministers, or the violence of ambitious patriarchs. Learning was obliged to content itself with making humble efforts to preserve for the West, that of which its native seats had become unworthy. The only protection to religion was found in the ancient creeds, so simple, and yet so complete, so brief, and yet so clear and full in the communication of all the essentials of Christian doctrine. In opposition to the salutary influence which they exercised on many minds, was the spirit of innovation, so zealously fostered by the churchmen of the age. The fact, indeed, is a singular one, but well deserving of remark, though little flattering to the temper exhibited by great ecclesiastical institutions; namely, that while no class of establishments which can boast a primitive origin are ever found to refer with such fondness and ostentation to early authority as churches, no institution, based upon ancient authority or example, has ever more wantonly deviated from primitive form, rule, temper, or example, than the churches which still trace all their rights to an apostolic origin.

The controversy respecting image worship; the increase of the monastic orders, corruption growing with their growth; the rude interference of the court in matters of church government and discipline; together with the terror diffused among all classes by the conquests of the Turks and Saracens, rendered the vast territory of the Eastern church, one perpetual scene of confusion and dis-

tress. Had the patriarchs of Constantinople been men of simple piety and energetic minds, they might have checked the progress of their church's ruin. But for the most part, they were entirely devoted to the nominal interests of their order. They could contend with untiring energy against their opponents; but it was not the want of religion which made men their enemies, but their daring to question some point of patriarchal discipline, or to throw a doubt upon the existence of some favourite right, or pretended dignity. Thus, however legitimate the opposition of the Greek to the Roman church, almost all the bad passions of human nature were exhibited in the progress of the strife. While the pope and the patriarch were disputing as to their rival claims to the title of universal bishop, they were violating every law of evangelical charity. So also in the quarrel which they kept up with their respective emperors. The objects for which they strove were rarely of intrinsic value. They employed the power of the church to support their own pretensions; and when they failed, the clamour which they raised disturbed the peace of states, but never aroused the sympathies of mankind in behalf of truth or holiness.

In the ninth century, the controversy between the celebrated Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, and the Roman pontiff, proved that the oneness of the visible church had suffered an almost fatal wound. These two ecclesiastical potentates fulminated anathemas against each other with terrific fierceness; and the world looked on, in amazement, at the spectacle thus afforded it of war between the ministers of grace, and in the very holy of holies. A similar contest took place in the middle of the eleventh century, when the legates of the pope placed upon the altar of Saint Sophia an act of excom-

munication against both the emperor and the patriarch, and were met by as bold a defiance on the part of almost every patriarch in the Eastern provinces. The increasing power of the Roman church, rendered its rulers so much the more determined in their attempts to subject that of the East to their control. Urban IV. took a prominent part in these experiments. They were continued with various appearances of success throughout the twelfth century. The establishment of a Latin empire gave new hopes of triumph; but they were unfulfilled; and it was not till the Greek emperor, Michael Palæologus, saw it necessary for the support of his own cause to promote a reconciliation with Rome, that a reunion between the two churches was accomplished. This apparently grand event took place in 1274, when the ambassadors of the emperor attended the council of Lyons, and there accepted, in the name of their master, and of the church, the stern conditions on which peace was offered with the hierarchy of the West.

But the causes of dissension were not to be deprived of their virulence by any of these state arrangements. The long-continued controversy respecting the procession of the Holy Ghost; the undiminished resolution of the Latins to add the words "And from the Son" (*Filioque*) to the old sentence of the Creed; and the equal determination of the Greeks not to allow them to form part of the confession of faith, was still fraught with peril to any scheme of peace. It was soon understood, moreover, both by the clergy and people, that the reconciliation which had been effected was not one of either principle or affection. Universal discontent prevailed at what was considered the weak or hypocritical concessions of the few great prelates of the Greek church, through

whose instrumentality the emperor had been enabled to accomplish his political purpose. An appearance of peace was faintly preserved during the remaining years of Michael Palæologus; but on the accession of his son Andronicus, in 1224, a council was assembled at Constantinople, and the act of union solemnly repealed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROMAN PONTIFFS—RELATIONS WITH THE KING OF FRANCE—
BENEDICT XII.—CONTROVERSY RESPECTING THE BEATIFIC
VISION—PAPAL SCHISM—GENERAL STATE OF THE
CHURCH.

BONIFACE, whose struggles with the power of the
A. D. French monarchy had terminated so unhappily
1314. for himself, was succeeded by Benedict XI., whose
main effort it was, during his brief pontificate of eight
months, to conciliate the favour of king Philip. On the
death of this pope, a long and angry contest took place
between the opposite parties, into which the cardinals
had formed themselves, respecting the choice of his suc-
cessor. The increasing power of France encouraged many
of the churchmen of the time to seek its favour as the
surest medium of advancement. Others were as anxious
to concentrate the energies of the Roman church in Italy.
Thus, on the one side, were arranged the cardinals, who
favoured the pretensions of the Colonna and French party ;
and, on the other, those who determined to uphold the
interests for which Boniface had sacrificed his repose and
his life. Nine months were passed in this dispute. At
the end of that time, one of the cardinals suggested that
a plan might be adopted which would extricate them
from a dilemma, so likely to bring disgrace upon them-
selves, and to inflict injury upon the church. He pro-
posed that the one party should nominate three candi-

dates for the vacant dignity, and that the opposite party should have the choice of one out of the three. This was agreed to. The Italian faction having obtained the right of nomination, named three archbishops who owed their preferment to Boniface. The one of the three on whose fidelity and zeal the party placed the greatest confidence, was Bertrand, archbishop of Bordeaux. By a skilful exercise of political cunning, little becoming in a churchman, the leader of the Gallican party contrived to bring the king of France and the archbishop together, and to make the latter suppose that his acquiring the tiara depended entirely upon the approval of the monarch. Fired with ambition, and ready to gratify it on any terms, Bertrand assented to all the demands of the king, and took a solemn oath, that he would absolve him of the sins which he had committed against the church; restore him and his ministers to communion; grant him the tithes of his kingdom for five years; abolish the memory of Boniface, and bestow the rank of cardinal on the Colonna. There was another demand, it is said, and which was granted as readily as the rest; but what it was remained a profound secret; and it is only suspected, that it referred to the removal of the papal court from Italy to France.

Bertrand having thus secured the favour of the French king, and transferred his allegiance from the party by which he had been nominated, to that which had now the power of election, the latter selected him as the one of the three most deserving the dignity. He was accordingly placed in the papal chair, and assumed the title of Clement V.

The freedom and purity of the church suffered additional injury from this election. Cardinals and bishops

were created without regard to the character of those on whom the rank was conferred, but according to the agreement of the pope and the king to promote their favourites. It was not the church of Rome merely which felt the evil consequences of such a species of sacrilege. The religious interests of every country in Europe were affected by it. While the clergy themselves learnt to regard the high offices in the church as intended only for the favourites of the great, they were either tempted to cultivate the arts of a mean ambition, or of a servility unworthy of their order; or they lost the vigour which, among the great mass of mankind, requires the stimulant of hope, as well as the aid of principle. The consequence of such a state of things was soon seen. A haughty hierarchy and an ignorant clergy took the place of that body of sedate, enlightened, and spiritual men who ought to have been found in all the offices of the church. Thus the evils which followed in the train of civil commotions, met with little resistance on the part of those who, with more learning and piety, might have effectually retarded their growth. That men devoted to the service of religion, ought not to be moved by selfish considerations, is doubtless true. But 'practically, and under all the ordinary circumstances in which they can be placed, the maxim will only be followed out according to the common working of human feelings. In times of great spiritual healthiness, sacrifices may be looked for, on the part of all, who are engaged in the work of holiness. But this being the case, the expense of the sacrifice, the responsibility of making the offering, will not rest with the humbler classes of workmen only. Bishops and dignitaries, in all varieties of circumstances, will be ready to forego their pretensions to disproportionable wealth;

to those exorbitant privileges, and claims to patronage, which have rendered them, in the later ages of the church, so liable to suspicion and censure.

Clement, having leagued himself in the closest bands of amity with the French monarch, took up his residence in Avignon, which thenceforth became, during the long period of almost seventy years, the seat of the papal government. The first use which Philip made of his influence with the pontiff was to suppress the order of Knight Templars. Offended at their haughty demeanour, and fearing their power, he obliged Clement to arraign them on charges both of licentiousness and heresy. Whatever their crimes, the fierceness with which they were pursued leads to the suspicion, that their enemies hated them for their renown, rather than for their offences. The order was formally declared abolished at the council of Vienne, in 1311. Many of its most distinguished members were consigned to prison. Among them was the grand-master, who died on the scaffold, firmly protesting his innocence of the crimes for which he was condemned.

Another of the objects which Philip hoped to accomplish by the instrumentality of Clement, was indicative of a still baser spirit of revenge. His hatred to Boniface had not ceased with the death of the latter, and he now desired his successor not only to declare his memory accursed, but to direct that his bones should be disinterred, and committed to the flames. Clement, who was indebted for his own original promotion to the friendship of Boniface, heard this proposal with unaffected disgust and horror. He represented to the monarch the scandal which would attend such a proceeding; and promising to fulfil his wishes in all other matters, he succeeded in diverting him from his design.

The death of Clement gave occasion to another violent contest between the French and Italian party at Rome. For two years the church remained without a ruler. At the end of that period, the cardinals in the interest of France succeeded in placing one of their own faction on the throne; and John XXII., as the new pontiff was called, continued to pursue the same policy as his predecessor. But involving himself in a quarrel with the emperor, and attempting to accomplish enterprises "beyond his power, he greatly increased the unpopularity of the court of Avignon. His successor, Benedict XII., checked in some degree by his really excellent qualities, the progress of those corruptions which were daily creating more disorder in the world, and exciting greater indignation in the minds of those who beheld them. His proposed reformation embraced a wide circle of abuses. Thus in the list of his corrections we find it stated, that he revoked all the commendams of cathedral churches and abbeys, with the exception of those granted to patriarchs and cardinals; that he compelled all bishops to reside in their dioceses; forbade plurality of benefices; nullified all "favours expectant," which were not agreeable to the rules of the civil law; and deprived, as far as he was able, all unworthy ministers of their livings, supplying their place by others of better character. So, also, he lessened the number of dispensations, and resisted the practice of gaining bulls from the Roman see for private and illegitimate purposes. The large revenues which belonged to his dignity were mainly expended in works of charity; and the efforts which he employed to suppress the vices of the clergy, and the abuses in the conduct of his own court, were followed by exertions equally strenuous to remove the causes of dispute existing between

Rome and various European princes. Thus instead of indulging in the arts adopted by his predecessors, he manifested an anxious desire to foster peace and justice. A striking instance of this was shown in his conduct respecting the ambassadors of king Edward of England. These strangers had been treated with great indignity by the emissaries of France. Benedict espoused their cause; and persevered in his determination to resent the insult which they had received, till the authors of the affront were condignly punished. It is also especially related of him that he did not bestow the great offices and dignities of the church upon his nephews and relations. He had a niece whom he dearly loved. Many men of rank sought her hand, in the expectation that such an alliance would promote their own fortune and grandeur. But Benedict discouraged their addresses, and married his niece to a merchant, resolving never to enrich his relatives from the coffers of the church.

A very remarkable controversy had been excited by John XXII. respecting the state of believers after death. According to that pontiff, the blessed are not to be admitted to the beatific vision, in fulness and perfection, till after the general judgment, and the reunion of the soul and body. This opinion he stated in several sermons; but, great as was his authority, he could not prevent some monks and bishops from questioning its orthodoxy. The subject was one suited to the temper of the age. It soon created a degree of interest in the minds of the curious, which proved dangerous to the credit of the pope. When his legates appeared at the court of Philip of Valois, they were closely questioned respecting the views of their master. The king himself, fearing lest their subtle language might entangle him in some per-

plexing difficulty, called around him a number of bishops, doctors, and abbots, and desired the chief representative of the pontiff to be present while these learned men answered the questions which he wished to propound. He then asked them, "Whether the souls of the saints see the face of God as soon as they are dead?" And, "Whether the vision, which they have immediately after their death, shall cease at the day of judgment, and be replaced by another?" To the former of these questions, the bishops and others answered in the affirmative. In regard to the second, some replied, that the vision which the saints enjoy immediately after death, will not cease at the day of judgment; but others spoke less definitely, and said, that it will be more perfect after that day. As the latter opinion had some appearance of agreement with that of the pope, the legate assented to its adoption; but the king directed the divines to give their decision in form, and to sign and seal the document in which it was written. This was done; and the monarch then dispatched a message to the pope, declaring, in violent language, that he must submit to the sentence which the doctors of divinity at Paris had passed upon his opinion; and that he would severely punish whoever ventured hereafter to preach or publish it. John received this announcement with more patience than might have been looked for from a Roman pontiff; and on his death-bed, retracted the notion which he had so earnestly espoused, declaring it to be his belief, that souls which have been purged from their sins, pass, on their separation from the body, into the kingdom of heaven; and dwell in paradise with Christ, and the angels; beholding God face to face, even the divine essence, as clearly as their state and condition, while separate from the body, will allow.

But this retractation did not satisfy all parties. It was still suspected that John XXII. died a heretic. Hence it became the duty of his successor to free the church from the danger and obloquy to which it would have been exposed, had it seemed to regard the subject with indifference. Benedict, accordingly, at the very commencement of his pontificate, gave a full exposition of his belief on this point of doctrine, and set it forth as that which might be regarded as the decision of the church. Thus, in a sermon preached in the year 1335, he showed, that the souls of the just, being purified, do actually enjoy the beatific vision, before the day of judgment. Shortly after preaching this sermon, he assembled the most eminent divines to assist him in again examining the question; and in the following year he published the result of their deliberations in a constitution, in which it was declared, that the souls of the saints, who died before our Lord's passion, and those of apostles, confessors, martyrs, virgins, and other baptized Christians, being purified, together with those also of infants, dying after baptism but before they have attained the use of reason, are in heaven, and paradise, with Jesus Christ and the angels, immediately after their separation from the body, or after their purification, and there enjoy the intuitive and direct vision of the divine essence, without the intervention of any object. And they have this immediate vision of God, because He is pleased, in his infinite love and goodness, to reveal himself clearly and openly to them; and hence they are happy and enjoy eternal rest. But while such are the privileges of the blessed, the souls of those who die in mortal sin, descend actually into hell, where they suffer the terrible torments of the damned. Notwithstanding this, however, all men shall rise, and appear

before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, to receive, every one, in his body, reward or punishment according as he has done good or evil. The contrary doctrine, on any one of these points, was declared false and heretical.

A. D. The death of Benedict XII., after a pontificate
1342. of eight years, was a loss to the church, which good and thoughtful men sincerely lamented. He was succeeded by pontiffs who allowed themselves to be involved in political conflicts, and to assume an authority over princes and nations which, being in itself illegitimate, only tended to destroy the influence which they might properly have exercised for so many salutary purposes. Italy was, at present, in a state of deplorable confusion and anarchy. One city was warring against another with all the fury common to rival factions. Rome itself had its full share of the miseries arising from such a condition of public affairs. The absence of the pontiffs in Avignon deprived it of the protection which, even in the worst times, it generally enjoyed, through the respect paid to their name and authority. Gregory XI., who was raised to the papal throne in 1371, resolved to make one grand effort to restore the venerable city to its former condition. With this design in view, he left Avignon in the year 1376, and proceeded to Rome, accompanied by a great body of cardinals. But neither the Florentines, who were the chief cause of the present disorders, nor the Romans themselves, manifested any regard for his authority. The magistrates had been too long accustomed to exercise the rights of their office, without control, to bear patiently the loftier domination of the pope. Gregory, therefore, soon found it expedient to retire to Anagni. Here he formed plans which seemed to offer some prospect of success; but on his return to

Rome, he was seized with a sickness, of which he died in the course of a few months, and thus left affairs in a more hopeless state of confusion than before.

Europe was now to witness a spectacle of strife and schism of which the Christian church had never as yet presented so melancholy an example. The Italian party, although so little prepared to support the late pope in his worthy attempt to re-establish the seat of the papacy in Rome, was anxious to prevent, if possible, the election of a pontiff, whose national predilections might lead him to transfer it again to Avignon. But late events had given a vast preponderance of influence to the Gallic cardinals; and hence, when a new pope was to be elected, the opposite factions were prepared for a contest, in which old associations, and all the better arguments of legal right, were to try their strength against the force of accident and temporary expediency.

The decision of this all-important controversy was looked forward to with intense anxiety, not merely by the parties immediately concerned, but by the best and wisest men in Europe. Whatever their views regarding the papacy, they saw clearly that the state of the visible church depended mainly upon the character of the maxims connected with the development of this its ruling institution. The feeling which prevailed in Rome was not favourable to the hopes of those who yearned for peace and union. A majority of the cardinals were resolved upon electing a pontiff who would return with them to Avignon. There, far removed from the struggles of the Italian states, inspired by the first breath of reviving liberty and learning, they knew that they should be enabled to enjoy themselves in the luxurious quiet, so dear to the dignified and wealthy churchman. In Rome,

eminence was fraught with danger. It exposed its possessor to the watchful eyes of inquirers, satirists, and reformers; but in Avignon, the richest cardinal, or bishop, might, by the mere rustling of his robes, lead the admiring people to believe that he was giving an ample return to the church for all which the church gave him.

Rome has had its bold, restless multitude in every age of the church, as well as in those of the republic. When the cardinals were now preparing for the exercise of the highest privilege pertaining to their dignity, the people thronged around them, and insisted that they should choose a pontiff who would not forsake their ancient city for a foreign land. Though alarmed at the fierce cries of the multitude, the cardinals firmly replied that an election made by constraint would not be valid; that they would do whatever their duty permitted to satisfy the wishes of the Italians, but that they must be left to decide according to the dictates of their conscience, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

On the day when the conclave was appointed to meet, guards were placed at the several gates of the city to prevent the cardinals from effecting their escape, if they should act contrary to the will of the Romans. A tumultuous throng assembled about the place where they carried on their deliberations. As first one and then another rumour gained ground, the people were loud in their expression of pleasure, or the contrary. At length their doubts as to the issue of the proceedings in the conclave excited them to ungovernable rage. They demanded the instant satisfaction of their wishes. "We will have a Roman, or at least an Italian, for pope. Let the cardinals choose an Ultramontane at their peril." This was their constant cry; and the members of the

conclave finding that some violence would be committed if they further delayed their decision, agreed among each other to elect, but nominally only, Bartolomeo Pregnano, archbishop of Bari. The multitude mistaking the name of this prelate for that of a French ecclesiastic, proceeded to acts of violence, and the cardinals, thankful to escape with their lives, left the people and the new pope to arrange, as they best could, their future measures. It soon became known that the conclave had not intended the archbishop of Bari to be pope. But he had resolved, from the first, that they should neither make him the victim of their duplicity, nor employ him as a puppet to amuse the people. With him, his election was a matter of earnestness, and he determined that it should be so with the church over which he was placed. Sending, therefore, for the magistrates, he desired them to compel the attendance of the cardinals. Thirteen of the trembling dignitaries were found in various parts of the city. Not daring to disobey a summons supported by the whole body of the people, they proceeded to the archbishop's residence, performed the usual acts of homage, and formally proclaimed him supreme pontiff by the title of Urban VI.

Notwithstanding the appearance of ambition in the eagerness with which Urban had seized the prize so strangely gained, he is described by early writers as possessing many excellent qualities; as a learned canonist, and a firm opponent of the simoniacal practices which had so injured the character of the clergy; as a stern moralist, and a faithful observer of the most wholesome rules of his order. It seems, indeed, that had he had fewer virtues he might have retained his dignity with little fear of a protracted opposition. But his severe

temper would not allow him to leave sins unpunished, or error uncorrected, though discovered in the principal men of the party which could have done most to support him. He had soon, therefore, a host of enemies. A large body of the cardinals met together at Fondi. There they declared him an usurper, and a tyrant ; and, in the end, proceeded to the election of another pope. Their choice fell upon the cardinal of Geneva, brother of the earl of Geneva, a man of wealth and talent, and well calculated, therefore, to execute the designs of his party.

Having assumed the title of Clement VII., the new pontiff immediately began to exercise his influence and ability to secure the success of his cause in the various European courts. He failed, however, in most of his schemes. While he was acknowledged by France and Scotland, and, sometime after, by Spain, his claims were rejected by England, and almost all other European states. Finding it vain to look for popularity in Italy, he at last retired to Avignon, and there commenced a war of anathemas and excommunications with Urban, which kept the church at large, and all Europe, in a state of demoralizing confusion. Violences were perpetrated on both sides which would have disgraced the lowest political faction. Bishops, and others of the clergy were seized by the opponents of the party to which they belonged, and, in many cases, put to death, some being drowned, and others burnt. Villages, churches, and monasteries, especially in the kingdom of Naples, were destroyed by the Clementines. The same conduct was pursued by the partisans of Urban ; and in the general distress occasioned by these conflicts, many wealthy and eminent individuals were reduced to extreme poverty, while others, espousing the cause of the pontiff who of-

ferred the highest price for their allegiance, were enriched, whatever their character, with the best livings in the church. Urban himself was exposed to numerous dangers. On one occasion, several of the cardinals of his own party entered into a conspiracy against him. But he escaped their treacherous designs, and avenged himself by depriving them of their dignity, and confiscating their possessions. The war which he had to carry on with Naples threatened perpetually the ruin of his affairs. He was besieged in the castle of Nocera; and had it not been for the bravery of a German count, he would there probably have ended his pontificate and his life.

It was, at one time, hoped that the death of either of the rival popes would terminate the schism. But their followers profited too much by its continuance, or were too deeply implicated in the crimes to which it had tempted them, to suffer it to cease. Urban died in the year 1389; and the cardinals then at Rome speedily elected a successor, who assumed the title of Boniface IX. Thus all the evils which had been perpetrated under Urban VI. were renewed; and those who conscientiously desired the peace of the church, almost despaired of its being ever restored. The university of Paris now formed one of the most powerful bodies in Europe. It numbered among its members many men of piety and great acquirements. They had long lamented a state of affairs, which proved so injurious to all the interests of learning and religion. Resolved, therefore, to make one grand effort to correct the disorders, which neither popes nor cardinals could rectify, they held an assembly, in which three methods were mentioned as affording a prospect of success. The first of these proposed that the two popes should

simultaneously resign their claims to the dignity, and that the college of cardinals should then immediately proceed to the election of another pontiff. "This is the method, sire," said the representatives of the university, addressing the king of France, "which we prefer, as the readiest and easiest for terminating the schism. It is that best adapted to avoid trouble, expense, and other difficulties ; to calm the consciences of the faithful on both sides ; and to save the honour of the princes and states engaged to either party. The rival pontiffs ought themselves to embrace this method, for the sake of their own credit. A discussion might turn to the disgrace of one or the other, or of both. They ought to consider the sad condition of the flock of Jesus Christ, of which they are the shepherds, and for the state of which they will hereafter have to render so terrible an account."

The second method proposed was that of compromise ; the two popes submitting their claims to the judgment of some few pious and learned men, whose decision in favour of the one or the other should be final. By this proceeding, it was said, the difficulties attending a general council would be avoided, and an answer would be given to those who might pretend that Clement would endanger his interests, because the Italian bishops formed the more powerful party. The affair also might thus be quickly terminated, and the pope who abdicated, not called upon to render an account to any person, might simply ascribe the proceeding to the obedience which he owed to the will of God.

Another method still remained to be mentioned. It was that of remitting the whole matter to a general council. Such an assembly had usually, it was said,

consisted only of prelates ; but since, it was added, "many bishops, in these days, to our disgrace be it spoken, are ignorant men, and others of the same order are violently devoted to a particular party, it would be proper, in the present case, to admit to the council an equal number of doctors of divinity, and doctors of law, from the most celebrated universities, and representatives of the various religious orders, and the cathedral chapters." A council so constituted, it was remarked, might be useful not only for the extinction of the schism, but for the correction of discipline and manners. Following this observation, was the bold statement, that if either of the popes obstinately refused to adopt one or other of these proposals, and without offering another better adapted to restore peace, he ought to be judged as a schismatic and a heretic ; as a deceiver and a tyrant, instead of a pastor of Christ's flock. That being so, it was men's duty to chase him from the fold, as they would a wolf, and to inflict on him the severest punishments, as the worst of schismatics, seeing that he cared not for the ruin of the church, and thought but of satisfying his ambition and insatiable avarice.

The friends of religion waited with intense anxiety to see what would be the result of these proceedings on the part of the university. Charles VI. was sincerely anxious to promote a settlement of the dispute ; but no efforts could accomplish a design, the fulfilment of which depended upon the willingness of two proud and ambitious men to surrender their claims to more than regal domination. At length, finding their endeavours vain, the heads of the university, and the majority of the Gallican prelates, advised the king to withdraw from the obedience which had hitherto been rendered to the pope. The

monarch assented to this proposal ; and a solemn proclamation was made, in which he declared, that he, the church, the clergy, and the people of France, withdrew themselves entirely from the obedience of Benedict, as well as from the rival pontiff ; and that he enjoined his subjects no longer to acknowledge him, or to contribute to his revenue.

Benedict, after this, was kept a close prisoner in the castle of Avignon. He dreaded lest his cardinals might betray him, or that he might fall a victim to some sudden violence on the part of the people. Moved by his fears, he was at length induced to declare, that if his rival, Boniface, died, or should resign, or be driven from his usurped dignity, he would himself then immediately abdicate. But, strange to say, such was the division of sentiment on the subject, that Benedict, instead of being obliged to surrender his rights, as he seemed to be on the point of doing, heard, to his great joy, that the king of France had yielded to the wish of a powerful party in his dominions, and was ready to allow the decree, by which he had withdrawn from obedience to the pontiff, to be annulled. This measure was actually adopted ; a mere seeming assent to the conditions proposed by the king, securing to Benedict all the advantages arising from the submission of so powerful a nation as France to his unquestioned sway.

The conduct of Boniface tended to protect Benedict from the consequences of his own dishonest policy. With no intention, as it would seem, to resign his office, he had again and again promised to do so, if his rival would take the same course. Boniface died in Rome at the very moment that ambassadors from Avignon were engaged about the terms of a mutual abdication. The determi-

nation which he had exhibited never to surrender his power, as long as it was possible for him to retain it, proved to all parties that the troubles of the church were far from terminated, if men of this character and temper were to be promoted to its chief offices. Benedict's ambassadors, after being kept prisoners for some time, were only allowed to escape on the condition of paying a considerable ransom. To this they submitted; but they entreated their brethren in Rome to refrain from electing another pope till some communication could be had with the surviving pontiff at Avignon.

No attention was paid to this request The Italian
A.D. party hastened to elect a successor to Boniface;
1404. and another rival pope, who assumed the title of Innocent VII., recommenced the unholy war, which, it had been hoped, the death of the former might terminate. It was not, however, with his rival at Avignon only that Innocent had to contend. The Guelphs and Ghibelines were now in full force at Rome; and while the one pretended that the interests and happiness of the people would be best secured by the supremacy of the papal court; the other as firmly insisted upon the right of the civil magistrate to the management of all state affairs. A war between the two factions was the consequence of this dispute, and the quarrel was only settled in time to let Innocent VII. die in peace.

Again were the Italian cardinals implored not to elect another pontiff, but to wait till the death of Benedict might allow of a ready reconciliation between the conflicting parties. Before, however, any step could be taken in favour of those who were striving for the tranquillity of the church, a new pope, by the name and title of

Gregory XII., was placed on the throne. He had been obliged, at the time of his election, in common with the other cardinals, to promise that he would resign the dignity, on Benedict's expressing his readiness to do so also. To prove his sincerity in this respect, he was no sooner confirmed in his high office, than he wrote to his rival at Avignon, renewing the declaration which he had made, and entreating him to agree on such measures as might best promote the object for which they ought mutually to strive. His language was mild and courteous; and his letter was answered by Benedict in a similar style. For a little while, therefore, sanguine hopes were again entertained that the schism was near its termination. But Gregory found the sweets of power too much to his taste to suffer him to fulfil his good resolutions. One subterfuge after another was employed to excuse his entering upon the fair discussion of the subject. The two popes continued, therefore, precisely in the same relative position as before. Benedict was again condemned by a decree of the king of France, declaring him contumacious and heretical. His rival had, at the same time, to endure numberless affronts, heaped upon him by his discontented cardinals. To such an extent did their dislike to him proceed, that a considerable number of these powerful ecclesiastics having assembled at Leghorn, drew up a formal act, in which they declared, that it was the duty of the faithful to withdraw from the obedience of Gregory; that all those who persevered in favouring his cause were guilty of schism; that the grants which he had made, and whatever he had done as pope, were to be considered void; and they desired, and exhorted all prelates, and churchmen of every degree, to pay no money to him, assuring all those who should obey this order, that for whatever they

suffered on this account, they should, in due time, receive ample recompense.

Benedict seems to have despaired of recovering his authority in France, after having been a second time declared a schismatic and a heretic by the king. Taking with him, therefore, the few cardinals who remained faithful to his cause, he fled into Spain, where he was still acknowledged as head of the church, and vicar of Jesus Christ. In a synod which he summoned at Perpignan, he professed his desire to secure by any means the peace of the church. It was, therefore, determined that measures should be adopted for calling a general council, in which the two parties might be fairly represented, and such a sentence passed as should finally settle this all-important controversy. Pisa was the city fixed on as the place best adapted for the proposed assembly. No material objection was made on either side to this arrangement. Each party began immediately to busy itself about the necessary preparations, and all again was hope and expectation.

If we turn our attention now for awhile from this scene of strife and confusion,* we shall find that circumstances existed which materially tended to modify the gloomy aspect of affairs. The introduction of the Aristotelian philosophy had given to many minds an impulse in the direction of free inquiry, which, though only involving some of them in doubt and perplexity, as to the subjects immediately in view, was sufficient to preserve them from sinking back into lethargy or indifference.

* "*Andava sempre più avvalorandosi l'incendio dello scisma,*" is the striking language employed by one of the most learned and judicious of historians, in describing the general character of these times.—Muratori. *Annali d'Italia*, T. viii. p. 390.

Such men as Abelard could not speak and write with their characteristic deep devotion to the speculations in which they were engaged, without arousing their contemporaries to some degree of thoughtfulness, and love of inquiry. But there were other means of improvement, besides those furnished by the example, or exertions of some few distinguished individuals. The establishment of universities provided a permanent defence for learning. Of these venerable institutions, those of Paris and Bologna appear to have been the earliest which assumed the particular form answerable to our notions of a university. The whole circle of the sciences, as known in those times, entered into the plan of study pursued in their halls. Divinity held the foremost rank, and next to it the canon law, which had been reduced to a science by a learned monk, named Gratian. But though the highest degree of fame attended the skilful cultivation of these main branches of knowledge, the more general classes of literature were gradually allowed to occupy an important place in the schools. Grammar, in all its various applications, poetry, and rhetoric, had their several teachers; and in the thirteenth century, the courts of princes emulated the universities in the encouragement of men of learning and genius. Robert, king of Naples, was such a lover of literature, that both Petrarca and Boccaccio speak of him as the wonder of his age. Innocent III. and Frederic II. were no less devoted to elegant study; and the passion which they showed for such pursuits was readily communicated to those about them.

Italy furnished Paris with several of its most distinguished professors.* Anselm and Lanfranc led the way

* Teraboschi, *Storia della Letter. Ital.* t. iv. p. i. p. 124.

in the cultivation of theological science, and combined it with as many other branches of learning as the taste of the age would allow them to embrace. Peter Lombard, the far-famed master of the sentences, did little to promote the immediate interests of religious learning or inquiry ; but his celebrated compilation of passages from the fathers, as illustrative of the main doctrines of the church, lessened the danger to which divine truth was exposed by the scholastic speculations of bolder minds. The honour bestowed upon those who pursued the career which a union of curious theology and dialectics pointed out, was sufficient to tempt any ambitious scholar to adopt it as the surest road to fame. Titles significant of the profoundest admiration were given to the masters in these sciences. Thus, Alexander Hales, who taught in Paris, about the middle of the thirteenth century, was commonly known as the *Doctor Irrefragabilis*. Bonaventura, a distinguished professor of the same university in 1274, obtained the higher title of the *Doctor Seraphicus* ; while Thomas Aquinas, greater than all the rest, was distinguished as the *Doctor Angelicus*. But our own Roger Bacon, known as the *Doctor Mirabilis*, seems to have had a more legitimate claim to his title than any which could be advanced by his immediate predecessors. His knowledge, in itself remarkable, was rendered really worthy of admiration by the practical manner in which he appears to have applied it. He openly expressed his mingled sorrow and disgust, that while learning was pursued with a zeal and curiosity, unknown to other ages, no solid information was acquired. This want of any real success in the laborious efforts of his contemporaries, he attributed to the vanity of some, and the errors of others ; but more than all, to the un-

wise use made of the works of Aristotle, of which he sternly said, that, had he the power to do it, he would gladly order them all to be burnt.

The disputes between the heads of rival schools of philosophy might, in another age, have been confined to the sphere to which they properly belonged. But in the times of which we are speaking, churchmen held too important a place in society to let anything which interested their order continue a matter of indifference to the world. Hence the commonest principles of truth, both moral and divine; and even the maxims of jurisprudence were all, more or less, modified by the favourite systems of logic adopted by the schoolmen. Religion, bowed down on the one side by superstition, exercising its grossest influence, was exposed, on the other, to the chilling touch of a proud and heartless philosophy. When represented to the world with that change in its aspect, and in some of its noblest characteristics, which it suffered from these causes, the most lamentable proofs were given of its loss of power. Disbelievers and scoffers arose in the church itself. The emperor Frederic II. of Germany, was commonly reported to be an infidel, and many of the basest slanders heaped upon religion and its teachers were ascribed to him or to his favourites. Though it is probable that Frederic was falsely accused of being an enemy of the gospel, having only uttered some bitter sarcasm against its unfaithful ministers, yet the temper of men of his class and character is clearly intimated by these reports of his conduct. The period, moreover, during which the false shows of religion may be satirized, while a reverence for true religion is preserved, is soon passed over in respect to the world at large. Men quickly yield to the natural

infidelity of the heart ; and the causes, therefore, to which the corruption of a faith may be ascribed, may be viewed as chargeable with all the consequences of a general disbelief. In ordinary minds, when the shadow is found to delude, the reality of the substance is suspected.

It was a vast advantage for the truth, that while those who really loved and revered it recognised its oneness and simplicity, the parties whose pursuits had so little in common with its interests, were divided among themselves, and engaged in disputes on every point of science and theology. Even the monastic orders, especially the Dominicans and Franciscans, much as they might be opposed to each other on subjects peculiar to their respective vows, assumed a still more hostile attitude in the schools of Paris, and when discussing whether abstractions have a real or only a nominal existence.

A race of philosophers called Mystics, appeared as the antagonists of all those scholars who confined themselves to the subtleties of argument. The Mystics brought in feeling and affection as another element of human thought. In the fifteenth century the study of Plato had happily become so general, that while the harsh and dangerous errors of the commentators on Aristotle were in great measure corrected, those of the Mystics were exposed to the light of a system analogous to their own, but more thoughtfully elaborated, and thus admirably calculated to warn the best among them to submit their visionary notions to the test of a purer and a simpler logic.

The doctrines of religion, exhibited through the medium of the one or the other of these systems, pre-

sented to ordinary minds many startling inconsistencies with the plain, unmodified gospel. When a glimpse was gained of some primitive doctrine, seen only by its own light, there was but one alternative for the believer. He must either admit it into his soul as something distinct from all that mass of notions which he had been instructed to reverence as the traditions of the church, or he must exert the best powers of his intellect to harmonize the one with the other, to compel, that is, the little truth which he held in its pure form to clothe itself in so much of what was human and carnal, as would prevent it from standing too prominently forward in his creed.

It is easy to see, from considerations of this kind, how painful must have been the state of even the best minds in times like those described. In few instances could they hope to attain to that freedom from doubt so beneficial to peace and holiness. A question had been started respecting the nature of one of the holiest means of grace in the church of Christ. The controversy on the real presence was as unsettled as ever. Though the opinion of the ruling party was wholly in favour of the views supported by Paschasius Radbertus,* there were still those who adhered to the simpler idea of the eucharist. But their position was almost that of schismatics or heretics. The fourth general Lateran council, held in the year 1215, decreed the doctrine of transubstantiation to be an article of faith. Towards the middle of the same century, the ceremony of kneeling to the host, and other like formalities, were established; and

* Abbot of Corbey, in the ninth century; and whose treatise, which appeared in 831, contained the first distinct exposition of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

in 1311, Clement V. confirmed the observation of the festival of the Lord's Body, (*Corporis Domini*,) first introduced by Urban IV. It was now also that the cup began to be denied to the laity ; and, in short, the whole system of religious belief, discipline, and morals was subjected, on the one hand, to the wilful pride, and, on the other, to the base ignorance and gloomy superstition, of a few tyrannical ecclesiastics.

CHAPTER XXIX. ' .

PAPAL SCHISM—RIVAL PONTIFFS—JOHN XXIII.—COUNCIL OF
CONSTANCE—TERMINATION OF THE SCHISM—WICKLIFFE—
JOHN HUSS, AND JEROME OF PRAGUE.

THE fifteenth century had dawned upon a scene of trouble and confusion. Laudable as had been the efforts of the king of France and other princes to suppress the schism, they had hitherto utterly failed of success. It was now resolved that the two rival pontiffs, "more enamoured with the splendour of their dignity than with the church of God,"* should be subjected to the judgment of a tribunal, from the sentence of which it might be difficult for them to appeal. The proposed council assembled at Pisa, in the month of April, 1409. A numerous body of cardinals, four patriarchs, twelve archbishops, and as many bishops, abbots, proctors from the universities, ten ambassadors from France, England, Poland, Cyprus, and other countries, contributed to add grandeur and authority to the meeting. Each of the pontiffs had his powerful advocate. Gregory was defended by the ministers of Robert, king of the Romans; while Benedict was equally supported by those of the king of Aragon. The business of the council was continued till the middle of the month of June, when a decree was drawn up and published, declaring both

* Muratori Annali d'Italia, t. ix. p. 48.

Gregory and Benedict heretics, excommunicated, and deprived of all ecclesiastical dignities. These popes having been thus deposed by the sentence of the council, the assembled fathers immediately proceeded to the election of another pontiff. Their choice fell upon the cardinal of Candia, a man, it is said, of great learning, much sweetness of disposition, and of no less liberality. He assumed the title of Alexander V., and was crowned a few days after his election.

But if those who took the most conspicuous part in the council of Pisa hoped that its decrees might really restore peace to the church, they were doomed to be grievously disappointed. Instead of their having healed the schism, they had only set up another claimant to the papal throne. A great part of Italy, France, England, Poland, and other countries, gladly acknowledged Alexander, as the one legitimate head of the church; but many large and wealthy provinces still persevered in rendering their homage to Gregory and Benedict, who, though exposed even to personal danger, asserted as boldly as ever their right to the obedience of the faithful.

Alexander's amiable qualities were counted but of little value in comparison with the injury which he was supposed to inflict upon the church by his too soft and yielding temper.* The benefices over which he had control were bestowed upon the favourites, and even the domestics, of the cardinals who pretended to support his

* Theodoricus a Niem. de Schismate, lib. iii. c. 41, p. 243. Argent. 1609. Maimbourg pretends that this author, who was at one time pontifical secretary, found fault with Alexander's liberality, because he had not himself shared it to the extent he wished.—*Histoire du Grand Schisme*, t. ii. liv. iv. p. 81.

cause. He was ignorant of the canon-law, and too indifferent to the great questions debated in his courts to exercise his proper functions as a judge. His death, therefore, which happened in little more than a year after his elevation, though deplored by those who revered him for his virtues and piety, was far from being lamented by the active leaders of the party which was striving for the reunion of the church.

John XXIII., Alexander's successor, was a man of the most opposite character.* He had rendered himself wealthy in his ecclesiastical employments by tyranny and cunning; and history speaks of the base policy which he employed to secure his election to the pontificate, on the anticipated death of Alexander, whom he kept entirely subject to his control. The conduct which he pursued towards the Roman people soon provoked their enmity; and it was greatly to their joy that Ladislaus, king of Naples, succeeded in compelling him to make a precipitate flight from the city. He had not long taken up his abode in Bologna, when he learnt that Ladislaus was pursuing measures still further to humble his power.

But one means of escape remained to him. It was evident that his resources were not sufficient to support a lengthened contest with Ladislaus. With the ability and

* Raynaldus does not hesitate to insert, in his account of this pontiff, the common report, that he caused Alexander V. to be poisoned. "*Jam merito queritur Gregorius Balthasarem Cossam ambitionis veneno tumuisse, cum etiam invadendi in iis turbis pontificatus cupidine ureretur, quem dum cardinalatum gerebat libidinum, omnique vitiorum genere contaminatissimum manifeste constat sententia in concilio Constantiensi adversus ipsum lata, tum in eadem objectum est ipsum veneno Alexandrum V. interimendum curasse.*" — *Annales Eccles.* Raynald. Auct. t. viii. p. 220.

shrewdness which marked his character, he instantly took the step which seemed necessary to his safety. The lately elected emperor, Sigismund, would, he knew, willingly espouse his cause ; when, by such a course, the increasing credit of the king of Naples would be effectually checked. Having communicated, therefore, with Sigismund, it was agreed, that a council should be summoned to meet at Constance, and that the questions still agitated in the church should be there again made the subject of solemn deliberation.

After due preparation, which was not unattended with difficulty, the council was opened at Constance, on the sixteenth of November, 1414. John XXIII. occupied the chief place in the assembly. He was supported by the emperor Sigismund ; and all the solemnities of religion were employed to give grandeur to the proceedings. But before any public discussion took place, the principal members of the synod were called upon to decide on some points of great importance to its authority. By most of the older cardinals it was contended, that there was but one sure way of attempting the restoration of union, and that was by desiring John XXIII. to agree with the other two popes in a common act of abdication. To this it was answered, that such a measure would invalidate the authority of the council of Pisa, which had been lawfully called, and the decisions of which, it was universally acknowledged, were canonical. But little weight was ascribed to this argument. The general feeling was against John's retaining the pontificate ; and numerous stories were told to prove his unfitness for so high and sacred a trust.

The report of this secret discussion reached the ears of John when it was too late for him to retrace the step

which he had taken. His first idea was to try his strength with the council, and fairly battle for his dignity. But old habits of diplomacy still held possession of his mind ; and he resolved to endeavour to escape from his present difficulty by subterfuge. Having learnt, therefore, that the council had determined to propose and accomplish his deprivation, he sent for some of the cardinals, and declared to them, with great appearance of sincerity, that he was ready to resign his dignity, and do whatever might tend most effectually to the good of the church. But this offer was cautiously combined with the condition, that the two rival pretenders to the papal throne should, at the same time, perform what had been prescribed them by the council of Pisa ; and that, if they refused to do so, the process against them should be recommenced.

Having carefully penned the declaration, in the form which seemed best suited to their purpose, the deputies of the council presented it to John, and at length obtained his solemn assurance that he would faithfully fulfil the promise which it contained.* But no sooner did the duke of Austria, with whom he had formed a league, appear in Constance, than he secretly withdrew from the city, and shut himself up, first, in the castle of Schaffhausen, a fortress belonging to the duke, and afterwards in that of Friburg.†

The flight of the pontiff brought into immediate force

* Raynald. *Annales Eccles.* t. viii. p. 392.

† Muratori *Annali d'Italia*, t. ix. p. 74. The duke of Austria soon found that to continue to support the cause of John XXIII. would prove his own ruin. He, therefore, speedily yielded to the remonstrances of the emperor and the council. Thus John found himself made a prisoner, where he expected to find the greatest security. Maimbourg. *Histoire du Grand Schisme*, lib. v. t. ii. p. 263.

a principle of vast importance to the church. It was solemnly proclaimed in the council, "that the synod being lawfully assembled, in the name of the Holy Spirit, and constituting a general council, it represented the whole Catholic church, militant, and derived its authority immediately from Jesus Christ; and that such being the nature of its power, every person, of whatsoever state or dignity, even the pope himself, was obliged to obey it in whatever concerned the faith, the extirpation of schism, and the general reformation of the church, both in its members and in its head." Thus was the all-important maxim established, that the pontiff, though supreme above all other ecclesiastical authorities, was not supreme as to a general council. The synod at Constance acted throughout on this principle. John XXIII. was compelled to plead guilty to the charges brought against him; and in the end was formally deposed, according to the tenor of his own act of renunciation.*

It required some further exercise both of authority and policy, on the part of the council,* to obtain the abdication of Gregory XII. This, however, was ultimately accomplished; and Benedict XIII., having been forsaken by all his cardinals, except two or three, was kept prisoner in a remote castle in Arragon, vainly retaining the name and ensigns of a dignity of which he had been deprived by the sentence of two legitimate synods.† Odon Colonna, a cardinal-deacon, was elected pope by the unanimous votes of

* The reader may be referred, for much valuable and interesting information respecting these times, to a History of Germany, by the Rev. R. B. Paul; (Murray, 1847;) a work very unpretending in its form, but combining the results of genuine historical research, with the most spirited illustrations, derived from the author's extensive acquaintance with the early literature of the country.

† Muratori Annali d'Italia, t. ix. p. 86

his brethren, and with the entire approval of the council. He assumed the title of Martin V.; and the two abdicated pontiffs had ample reason to rejoice that they had been called upon to resign their dignities, when such a man was to be appointed their successor. Gregory,* instead of being deprived of all ecclesiastical rank, as had been the case with other deposed popes, was endowed with the dignity of cardinal-bishop, and the first place in the sacred college. In addition to the honour of this high rank, he was also appointed one of the pope's legates for life. Whatever acts he had performed as pontiff were confirmed; and he was protected, by an especial decree, from any prosecution, either civil or criminal, on account of his proceedings while in possession of the throne.

John XXIII. was treated in a no less indulgent manner. Having eluded the vigilance of the guards who were appointed to watch his movements, he hastened to Florence, where Martin V. was then residing, and throwing himself at his feet, implored his favour and blessing. Martin readily accorded the desired boon; and proved his generosity by assigning the abdicated pontiff a high place in the college of cardinals.

But neither Gregory nor John long survived his degradation. The former died before the termination of the council of Constance; and the latter within six months after his reconciliation with the new pontiff. Their

* The respect entertained for Gregory was remarkably shown by the care which the members of the council took to proclaim, that though his re-election was forbidden, it was not from any disqualification arising from his conduct, or from his want of virtue and ability. It was only from the necessity of the case, and the desire of the council to prevent any fresh cause of dispute, that he was not to be again invested with the dignity.—Raynald. *Annales Ecclesiasticæ*, t. viii. p. 413.

death, with that of Benedict in 1424, removed the only remaining hope entertained by ambitious, reckless spirits, that the schism might still be prolonged. Martin had no difficulty in suppressing the vain efforts made by other pretenders to the papal throne ; and thus, after a period of fifty-one years, Christendom was relieved from one of the greatest practical evils to which it had been exposed since the formal establishment of an universal church.

Had we known nothing more of the council of Constance, than that a long and mischievous schism was terminated by its proceedings, we should have had reason to regard it as deserving the foremost place in the list of modern synods. But it was in this council that the darkest offence was committed, which the church had ever yet dared to perpetrate, by a general and public sentence, against truth, conscience, and humanity.

We have seen how the light of a primitive faith still existed among the Vaudois, and others, who lived in communion with them. But a more important movement towards reform, than any yet attempted, was made in England in the latter part of the fourteenth century. The church in this country had passed through all the varieties of agitation so common to one which asserts, but cannot realize, its right to independence. Several of the English monarchs had signalized themselves by their determined resistance to the encroachments of papal power.* But

* A memorable instance of this was afforded by Edward III., who, being called upon to render the homage to the pope which had been rendered by John, immediately summoned his parliament, which, acting according to the known temper of the monarch, determined, " that neither king John, nor any other king, could bring his realm and dominions under such servitude and subjection, unless by common consent of parliament, which consent was not obtained ; and therefore the acknowledgment and promise of tribute to the see of

the guides and teachers of the people were leagued with the enemies of spiritual religion. The darkness and corruptions, consequently, which attended the march of superstition, rapidly diffused themselves over the length and breadth of the land. Ever active, in the pursuit of their own interests, the ambitious members of the monastic orders took possession of all the most commanding stations in the universities, for the promotion of their particular objects. The mendicants were especially diligent in this respect; and towards the end of the fourteenth century, Oxford was almost overrun with begging-friars. Happily for the university, and still more for the common interests of religion, a man of vast learning, great powers of mind, and true devotion, was raised up at this time, not only to resist the growing evils of the age, but to prepare the way for a general reformation.

John Wicliffe was born at Loughborough, in the year 1324. He early manifested his love of knowledge; and on being sent to Oxford soon became distinguished among his contemporaries for the superiority of his views to the narrow prejudices of the schools. Though acquiring a profound acquaintance with the civil and canon law, and the favourite systems of philosophy, he found time to study the original languages of the Scriptures, and to examine the pages of the Bible with an attention to its literal meaning little practised in that age of pride and darkness. Suspected as this earnest pursuit of scriptural knowledge rendered him, he still rose to eminence, and

Rome, was against his coronation-oath, not to mention many other disabling reasons. If, therefore, the pope should attempt anything against the king by process, that then the king, and all his subjects, should, with all their force and power, oppose and resist the same.” —Collier, book vi. cent. xiv. s. 558.

to places of power in his university. A large body of the students flocked to the lectures which he delivered on the main doctrines of the faith. His style, and mode of reasoning, were strikingly opposed to those of the other professors; and in proportion as his popularity increased, he saw it necessary to defend his system by a yet closer application of the word of God. We have not sufficient space to speak at large of this forerunner of the wonderful men who accomplished the Reformation. But it may be easily understood, how fervently he must have propounded the lessons of the gospel, when he was able to render them precious in the sight of men who had been educated on principles so opposed to their simplicity. "Seven years," says Fuller, "Wicliffe lived in Oxford, in some tolerable quiet, having a professor's place, and a cure of souls. On the week days, in the schools, proving to the learned what he meant to preach; and, on the Lord's day, preaching in the pulpit to the vulgar, what he had proved before. Not unlike those builders in the second temple, holding a sword in one hand, and a trowel in the other; his disputing making his preaching to be strong; and his preaching making his disputations to be plain."*

The accounts given of Wicliffe's doctrines cannot be wholly depended upon. We can safely glean from them, however, that he beheld with just indignation, not merely the perversion of scriptural truth, but the shameful abuses of power practised by the higher clergy, as well as by the monastic orders. A sort of classified catalogue of his peculiar opinions is given by the venerable old historian above quoted. In alluding to the variety existing

* Church History of Britain, b iv. cent. xiv.

in the reports respecting them, he quaintly says, "wonder not at this difference, as if Wicliffe's opinions were like the stones on Salisbury Plain, falsely reported, that no two can count them alike. The variety ariseth, first, because some count only his primitive tenets, which are breeders; and others, reckon all the young fry of consequences derived from them. Secondly, some are more industrious to seek, perverse to collect, captious to expound, malicious to deduce far distant consequences, excellent at the inflaming of a reckoning, quick to discover an infant, or embryo error, which others overlook. Thirdly, it is probable, that, in process of time, Wicliffe might dilate himself in supplemental and additional opinions, more than he at first maintained; and, it is possible, that the tenets of his followers, in after ages, might be falsely fathered upon him."

It is from the statements of Thomas Waldensis, one of Wicliffe's greatest opponents, that Fuller forms his list. Among the articles which occupy the foremost place, are those which refer to the state and office of the pope. They are such as might be expected to proceed from so zealous a reformer. But he did not content himself with aiming his shafts at the Roman pontiff. If the accounts referred to be true, he proclaimed, that the benedictions, confirmations, and consecrations, performed by bishops, were "but tricks to get money;" that "plain deacons and priests may preach without licence of pope or bishop;" that, in the apostolic times, "there were only two orders, namely, priests and deacons;" and that, "a bishop doth not differ from a priest."

Of the sacraments, according to the same reporter, he said, first, of baptism, "that they are fools, and guilty of gross presumption, who affirm, that infants, which die

without baptism, are not saved." With equal force, he denied, that all sins are abolished by baptism. So, also, he stated, that baptism does not confer, but simply signifies the grace, which was given before. Secondly, of the Eucharist, he asserted, "that the host ought not to be worshipped, and that they who adore it are idolaters: that the substance of the bread and wine remain the same in the sacrament, and that Christ could not, even if he wished it, make his body to be at the same time, in several places."

It is probable that, had Wicliffe confined himself to mere matters of doctrine, he would have been allowed to remain unmolested, except by the attacks of rival schoolmen. But propositions were gathered from his public lectures and sermons, which struck directly at the principles of the papacy. Thus, he is said to have asserted,* "If God is, temporal lords may lawfully and meritoriously take away the goods of fortune from a delinquent church;" and, "whether the church be in such a state, or not, is not my business to examine; but the business of temporal lords; who, if they find it in such a state, are to act boldly, and, on the penalty of damnation, to take away its temporalities." Again, "It is not possible for a man to be excommunicated, unless he be first, and principally, excommunicated by himself. Nobody is excommunicated, suspended, or tormented with other censures, so that he is the worse for it, unless it be in the cause of God. Cursing, or excommunication, does not bind simply, but only so far as it is denounced against an adversary of the law of Christ. Christ has given to his disciples no

* Lewis's History of the Life and Sufferings of John Wiclif, chap. iv. p. 46. Oxford, 1820.

example of a power to excommunicate subjects, principally for their denying their temporal things; but has rather given them an example to the contrary. The disciples of Christ have no power forcibly to enact temporal things by censures. We ought, to believe, that then only does the pope, &c., bind or loose, when he conforms himself to the law of Christ. This ought to be universally believed, that every priest, rightly ordained, has a power of administering every one of the sacraments, and, by consequence, of absolving every contrite person from any sin." And, lastly, "It is lawful for kings to take away the temporalities from ecclesiastics who habitually abuse them. Whether temporal lords, or holy popes, or saints, or the head of the church, which is Christ, have endowed the church with the goods of fortune or of grace, and have excommunicated those who take away its temporalities, it is, notwithstanding, lawful, on account of the conditions implied in the endowment, to spoil her of the temporalities for a proportionable offence."

That it was Wicliffe's object to humble the pride of the haughty churchmen of his time, and to refute their claims to a power which should be independent of states, and superior to law, appears still more clearly from a passage in his "Sentence of the Curse Explained."* "Worldly clerks and feigned religious," he says, "break and destroy the king's peace, and his realm. For the prelates of this world, and the priests, high and low, say freely, and write in their law, that the king hath no jurisdiction, nor power, over their persons, nor over the

* Vaughan's Life and Opinions of John de Wycliffe, vol. ii. c. viii. p. 265.

goods of holy church. And yet Christ and his apostles were most obedient to kings and lords, and taught all men to be subject to them, and to serve them truly and cheerfully in bodily works, and to fear them, and honour them above all other men. The wise king Solomon, also, put down a high bishop, who was unfaithful to him and his kingdom, and exiled him, and ordained a good priest in his room, as the book of Kings telleth. And Jesus Christ paid tribute to the emperor, and commanded men to pay him tribute. Saint Peter, also, commandeth Christian men to be subject to every ordinance of man, whether unto the king, as more high than others, or unto dukes, as sent of him to the vengeance of evil-doers, and the praising of good men. Also, Saint Paul commandeth, by the authority of God, that every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. . . . Lord, who hath made our worldly clergy exempt from the king's jurisdiction and chastening, since God hath given kings this office over all misdoers! Clerks, and particularly high-priests, should be most meek and obedient to the laws of this world, as were Christ and his apostles; and thus be a mirror to all men, that they may yield this meekness and obedience to the king, and to his righteous laws. What sturdy robbers and traitors then are these to lords and kings, in refusing this obedience, and in thus giving an example to all the men of the land to become rebels against the king and the lords! For in this, and in what they teach, they instruct the commons of the land, both in words and deeds, to be unfaithful and rebellious against the king. And this seemeth well, according to their new law of Decretals, where proud clerks have ordained, that our clergy shall pay no subsidy, nor tax, nor anything for the keeping of our king, and

our realm, without assent from the worldly priest of Rome. And yet, many times, this proud, worldly priest is an enemy of our land, and secretly maintaining our enemies in war against us, with our own gold. Thus an alien priest, and the proudest of all priests, they make the chief lord over the whole of the goods which clerks possess in this kingdom, and that is the greater part thereof. And where are there greater traitors either to God or holy church, and especially to our liege lord and his kingdom? An alien, worldly priest, and an enemy to us, is made chief lord over the greater part of our country!"

These were sentiments which neither the pontiff himself, nor the wealthier class of the clergy, could be expected to tolerate. They brought into question the whole of the maxims upon which the pretensions of the church, as now constituted, were founded; and the most ambitious and arrogant of the English prelates were as anxious and ready as the pope to suppress the influence of a preacher, whose honesty and holiness were so opposed to their corruptions. Wicliffe was now spending the greater portion of his time at Lutterworth, to the rectory of which he had been presented by the king. But his piety and diligence as a parish-priest had no effect in subduing the hostility excited against him by the fears of the hierarchy. A formal complaint was made to the pope respecting his supposed heresy, and schismatical proceedings. Bulls were accordingly sent to England, directing the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London to cite him before them. The language employed in these instruments, is that of offended holiness and purity, indignant at the growth of the contrary vices. "It is now plain," says the pope, "that in that very kingdom which used to produce men endued with a

right knowledge of the Scriptures, grave, devout, and champions of the orthodox faith, there are now those who by their office ought to be watchmen, who are slothfully negligent; insomuch that the latent motions and open attempts of the enemies are perceived at Rome, situated at a great distance, before they are opposed in England." And further; "he had heard," he said, "with a great deal of concern, by the information of several very worthy to be credited, that John Wicliffe, rector of Lutterworth, in the diocese of Lincoln, and professor of divinity, (he wished he was not a master of errors,) had rashly proceeded to that detestable degree of madness, as not to be afraid to assert, dogmatise, and publicly preach such propositions as are erroneous and false, contrary to the faith, and threatening to subvert and weaken the estate of the whole church. He, therefore, requires them privately to inform themselves, whether or no he did teach such conclusions as were in the schedule he had sent them, inclosed in his bull; and if they found that he did so, that they should cause the said John Wicliffe to be apprehended by his authority, and laid in gaol; and that they should endeavour to get his confession concerning the said propositions and conclusions; and the confession, and whatever the said John shall say or write, by way of induction or proof, of the same propositions, and whatsoever else they should do in the premises, they should transuit to him by a faithful messenger, sealed with their own seals, and disclosed to nobody; and that they should keep the said John in sure custody, until they received his further commands, touching this matter."*

Bulls to the same purpose were sent to the king, and

* Lewis's Life of Wiclif, chap. iv. p. 49. Oxford, 1820.

to the university. The latter looked with jealousy at any attempt, on the part of the pope, to interfere with its rights or liberties. It was little inclined, therefore, to become the executioner of his will in respect to Wicliffe.* The accession of Richard II., and the general state of public affairs, delayed the fulfilment of the designs formed by the bishops. Timely notice, however, was given to the reformer by his friends at Oxford, that he stood in need of some powerful protector. He prudently adopted this advice, and found in the celebrated John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, to whom he had long been known, a firm and generous patron. At length he was summoned to appear before the archbishop, and the bishop of London, at St. Paul's. The expectations of the people were violently excited by these proceedings; but Wicliffe's friends in the court had lately rendered themselves obnoxious to the popular party, and hence the prelates were enabled to engage on their side a powerful body of allies. It was a season of great peril for Wicliffe. But the duke of Lancaster, and lord Henry Percy, then earl-marshal, attended him to the cathedral. The effort which the latter made to save Wicliffe from being incommoded by the crowd, angered the haughty bishop of London, who exclaimed, that, "If he had known what maistries he would have kept in the church, he would have stopped him from coming there." This is said to have greatly offended the duke of Lancaster, who immediately retorted, that, "he would keep such maistry there, though he said, Nay." Wicliffe, on reaching the place where the commissioners had fixed their tribunal, remained standing; but the earl-marshal desired him to sit

* Vaughan's Life of Wycliffe, vol. 1. chap. v. p. 358.

down, observing, that "he had many things to answer to, and, therefore, had need of a soft seat." The bishop of London again found cause of offence in this attention paid to the reformer, and declared, "that he should not sit there, for it was neither according to law nor reason, that he who was cited there to answer before his ordinary, should sit down during the time of his answer." Another altercation followed, when the duke of Lancaster interposed, and told the bishop, that "the earl's wish was but reasonable; but that he (the bishop) was grown so proud and arrogant, that he would bring about not only his own discomfiture, but that of all the prelacy of England; that he depended upon the greatness of his family, but that they should have enough to do to support themselves."

A popular tumult was the consequence of this dispute, and it was found impossible to proceed with the intended inquiry. The commissioners, however, again met, some few months after, to accomplish the design proposed by the papal bull. The archbishop's chapel, at Lambeth, was now chosen as the place of assembly. But the disturbance created by the throngs of people which crowded the avenues to the palace, and, at last, burst into the chapel itself, was as great as before. The judges found it difficult to proceed, but they seemed resolved upon accomplishing their purpose, and pronouncing a definitive sentence upon the reformer. They were on the point of delivering their judgment; but at this instant a messenger arrived from the queen-mother, and they were desired, in her name, to cease from any further proceedings. Their rage was thus curbed. They dare not disobey the mandate of so powerful a personage; and Wicliffe was again delivered to pursue those labours which were

destined to create such important changes in the religious state of the kingdom.

The remainder of Wicliffe's life was passed at Lutterworth. His translation of the Scriptures contributed, more than any of his numerous controversial writings, to the accomplishing of those grand purposes for which he had been raised up. In the early part of his career, he was indebted for the reputation and influence which he enjoyed, to his ability as a scholar. He possessed the powers which were then most valued in the universities; while his earnestness and integrity were equally calculated to secure for him the respect of those who were either still unsophisticated by vain philosophy, or who had sufficient strength of character to escape its trammels. The offices which he fulfilled as the head of a college, and as professor of divinity; the friendship entertained for him by the duke of Lancaster; the public employments to which he was, from time to time, admitted,—having been sent first on a mission to the papal court, and then as one of an embassy to the Low Countries,—all contributed both to enlarge his sphere of usefulness, and to make him better acquainted with the actual state of religion. But it was by his version of the Scriptures that he gave permanency to the blessings which he bestowed upon his countrymen. The knowledge which he thereby diffused had life and spirit in it. It took hold of the hearts of thousands whom truth in no other form had ever reached. A race of believers arose, prepared to assert the power of the gospel, in its antagonism to the debasing errors of the world; and mankind were aroused from their lethargy, if not generally to receive the truth, yet to wonder at the marvels which it wrought.

Wicliffe's opinions were quickly circulated throughout

the kingdom, and soon penetrated to other countries. Here his followers obtained the name of Lollards, a term originally of contempt, but now remembered as associated with the noblest qualities of Christian heroism. They encountered the fiercest storms of persecution ; and hundreds perished by all the various forms of martyrdom.

It was while evangelical doctrine was thus taking root in England, that the council of Constance was engaged in the effort to purify the churches of the West by decrees and canons. The state of religion in this country was a matter of serious concern to the ecclesiastics assembled at Constance. Wicliffe's doctrines were well known to them, and both he and his principles were made the subject of the severest censure. But while he was far beyond the reach of their power, two of the most eminent of those who owned the worth of his teaching, were exposed to the severest trial of faith and constancy. These two witnesses to the truth were John Huss, and Jerome of Prague. The former had early embraced the opinions of Wicliffe, as known by the circulation of his writings in Bohemia. As a professor in the university of Prague, Huss possessed considerable influence, and the use which he made of his great talents and learning soon rendered him obnoxious to the main body of the clergy. He gained a still higher degree of influence when he became a preacher, and instructed the people by reading, and commenting on, the Scriptures in the language of the country.*

The introduction of the system of indulgences, and other corruptions of the Roman church, filled Huss with

* *L'Enfant Histoire de la Guerre des Hussites, et du Concile de Basle*, t. i. liv. iv. p. 52.

yet deeper sorrow, as he contemplated the ordinary state of the people. His language grew more fervent, and the number of his hearers daily increased. The movement in favour of reform thus became general, and Huss was now joined by Jerome of Prague, a gentleman of rank and talent, and endowed with a generous enthusiasm, which rendered him ready to encounter any danger in the service of religion.

It was in vain for the dignitaries of the Bohemian church to attempt to suppress the eager desire of the people, seeking to know the truth, which had been so long obscured, or so imperfectly administered for their edification. The state of things was too alarming to the hierarchy to be allowed to continue. Huss was accordingly summoned to give an account of his doctrine and proceedings before the council of Constance. His friends contemplated with alarm the danger to which he would expose himself by obeying the citation. But he was not to be deterred by any personal considerations from fulfilling his call as a witness to the gospel. Having provided himself, therefore, with a safe-conduct, the only available though fallacious means of security, from the emperor Sigismund,* he set out on his journey towards Constance. As he passed from town to town, he proclaimed aloud the grand principles of Christian truth and holiness. On his arrival at Constance, he declared himself ready to answer any inquiries into his life and doctrine, which it might be

* This safe-conduct was worded with great particularity, and expressed the emperor's desire that all persons in authority, whether ecclesiastical or civil, should aid in protecting Huss on his journey, and during his stay at Constance. "*Desiderantes quatenus ipsum, cum ad vos pervenerit, grate suscipere. favorabiliter tractare.*"—*Historia et Monumenta Joan. Hus*, t. i. p. 2. Norimberg, 1715.

the will of the council to institute. It was not, however, until twenty-six days after he reached the city, that he was summoned to appear before the cardinals selected to examine him. The very commencement of the proceedings against him was marked by injustice. Instead of his being allowed to state his opinions, and justify himself in the presence of the assembled representatives of the church at large, he was exposed to the tortuous questionings of men who would probably have felt that they had failed in ability, or in the exercise of their authority, had they not treated him as a convicted heretic.

The result might easily be foreseen. Huss was committed to prison. Six months passed away before he was again called before the council. During that time he suffered greatly from sickness, and from the cruelty with which he was treated by those who guarded his dungeon. The emperor Sigismund in vain complained of the disrespect thus shown to his safe-conduct. All he could effect for the reformer was to obtain for him another hearing, and that of a more public nature than that which had been at first allowed. Huss appeared before the council on the fifth and seventh of June. His language was such as it had ever been, frank, earnest, and explicit. He professed himself ready to recant any opinion which might be proved inconsistent with the word of God; but he would not admit that it was lawful to deny to the people the cup in the Lord's Supper, or to do aught else which was not justified by the word of God. His fate was now decided; but he was once more called into the presence of his accusers and judges. This, the final proceeding in the iniquitous process to which he had been exposed, took place on the sixth* of July, 1415

* This was also the birthday of Huss.

To the indelible scandal of his name and dignity, the emperor Sigismund had allowed himself to be prevailed upon to take a part in this affair. He pretended to discover, that, notwithstanding the safe-conduct which he had given to Huss, he had no right to defend him against the decision of the church. Seated, therefore, on his throne, he addressed the assembly in a speech,* in which he announced, that Huss had been found guilty of many grievous crimes, proved against him, not only by sufficient witnesses, but by his own confession, and that there was not one of these offences for which he did not deserve to suffer death. "If, therefore," added Sigismund, "he be not ready to recant all his errors, I judge that he ought to die in the flames."

The sentence was not passed till the following day, but Huss was now regarded as a condemned criminal.† Having been sent back to his dungeon, he was visited by some bishops, and by the noble-minded Bohemian knight, John de Chlum. The former spoke but according to their cold, technical, and official rule; but the latter addressed him with the fervour of an anxious and faithful friend. "I am, myself," he said, "an ignorant and unlettered man. Far be it from me, therefore, to intrude my advice upon one so learned as you. But I entreat you to bear with me while I call upon you to submit to the will of the council, if there be aught in your opinions which you may safely recant. Should this, however, not

* *Historia et Monumenta*, v. i. p. 34. Jerome was particularly mentioned by the emperor, as one of those disciples of Huss, who ought to be coerced with the greatest severity. He added, however, that there was some hope of his retracting. "*Illius vero discipulum, punito magistro, speramus deo mitiorem fore.*"

† Raynaldi *Annales Eccles.*, t. xxvii. p. 422.

be the case, then far better will it be for you to die, than to reject that which you know to be the truth." Huss replied, "I call God to witness that I am ready to recant, with all my heart, if the council can prove from holy Scripture, that I am wrong."

On the day appointed for his execution, the solemnity was performed of degrading him from the priesthood. He appealed, in vain, to the justice of his persecutors, to allow him to prove that many of the charges against him were base and unfounded. The bishops commanded him to be silent. Then falling upon his knees he committed his cause to God, and to Christ, exclaiming, "See, blessed Jesus, that which thou hast commanded, is condemned by my enemies. Yea! I confidently affirm, that we may safely appeal to thee, for thou wilt not be bribed, nor can any one deceive thee by false witnesses or fraud." Having thus spoken, he fixed his eyes upon Sigismund, and said, "I freely submitted to be examined before this tribunal, as guarded by the truth and faithful promise of the emperor, who is now present." Sigismund, it is said, blushed, and was silent.*

The spot appointed for his execution was on an island in the Rhine. As he walked along, he saw the flames arising from the pile kindled to burn his writings. But the malice of his enemies only served to increase the earnestness of his devotions. Finding that he was not permitted to utter his thoughts aloud, he prayed inwardly with such intense feeling, that it was evident to all around, how near a communion he held with heaven. His hands being bound behind him, his body was fas-

* Notwithstanding this, it was Sigismund himself who committed Huss into the hands of those charged with his execution.—*Acta et Monumenta*, t. i p. 36.

tened by six wet ropes, and by a chain round his neck, to the stake. He was now asked, for the last time, if he would recant. To this, he replied, "I call God to witness, that in all my sermons, lectures, and writings, and in all that I have done, I have sought nothing but the deliverance of souls from the power of the devil. And this will I joyfully seal with my blood."* The wood having been kindled, he sang with a loud voice, "Jesus, Son of the living God, thou who hast suffered for us, have mercy on me." These words he repeated three times. The smoke then hindered his utterance; but his lips were still seen to move in prayer, and the spectators expressed their astonishment that a heretic could pray so long and so well.

Jerome of Prague was, in the meantime, apprehended, and kept in close confinement. His examination before the council only served to afford a fresh proof of the blindness to truth and justice which prevailed in those times among the rulers of the church. The issue of the proceedings might be seen from the beginning.† At one time, weakened by long imprisonment and suffering, an

* *Narratio Historica. Acta, t. ii. p. 520.*

† His chief accuser was Gerson, the celebrated chancellor of the university of Paris, from whom so much more justice might have been expected. He appears, however, to have felt more resentment against Jerome, who had studied at Paris, on account of his philosophical heresies, than on that of his being a reformer. Thus, he charged him before the council with having advanced in the schools many dangerous errors in the matter of universals, and on the nature of ideas. Jerome replied, "I argued on these subjects philosophically, as a philosopher: as a graduate of the university, among other graduates. If I erred, show me where I erred, and I will humbly submit to be corrected."—*Narratio de M. Hieron. Pragensi. Acta, &c., t. ii. p. 522.*

impatient feeling seemed to arise in his heart. His persecutors took advantage of this, and pressed him to purchase his liberty by recanting. He assented; but he was not set at liberty, and he soon after sufficiently recovered his fortitude to resolve on enduring any tortures to which he might be exposed, rather than deny his faith. At his final appearance before the council, he was required to declare the sentence pronounced upon Huss fair and righteous. This he boldly refused to do. In the same manner, he sternly upheld the truth of the doctrines taught by his martyred friend; and, in the end, appealed from his earthly judges to his God and his Saviour. As nothing could induce him to retract these sentiments, he was condemned to be burnt; and he died in the flames, on the same spot, and with the same display of Christian heroism, as his venerable master.

Incidents such as these afford a proof, which cannot be gainsaid, of the sacrifices which had been offered to ecclesiastical authority, and of the use which the heads of the church had made of that authority, to subject truth, humanity, and religion to their haughty and selfish sway.

CHAPTER XXX. •

COUNCIL OF BASIL—OPPOSED BY EUGENIUS IV.—COUNCIL ASSEMBLED AT FERRARA—REMOVED TO FLORENCE—REUNION WITH THE GREEK CHURCH—SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

A. D. 1431—1503. THE termination of the papal schism was hailed with joy not only throughout the West, but in the East. Hopes were entertained by the Greek emperor that effectual measures might now be taken for the reconciliation of the two churches. He accordingly dispatched ambassadors to Rome, to treat with Martin on the subject. They were courteously received, and sent back with assurances of the most friendly feeling on the part of the pontiff. But affairs were still in too unsettled a state to allow of a successful issue to such proceedings. The opening of a council at Pavia, in 1423, the removal of the assembly to Sienna, and the stormy debates which ensued between the pope and some of the members of the synod, prevented the prosecution of any useful measure either for this purpose, or for the reformation of abuses.

It was not till June, 1431, that the discussion of the important matters referred to another general council by that of Constance, was resumed. The heads of the church then assembled at Basil. In one of their earliest sessions they decreed, as at Constance, that the council being convened in the name of the Holy Spirit, and representing the church militant, it derived its power immediately

from Christ, and that all persons, therefore, including even the pope himself, were bound to obey it, in whatever concerned the faith, the extirpation of schism, and the general reformation of the church in its head and members. By another decree, it directed, that all who should refuse to obey the decisions of the council, should be visited with condign punishment, even though the offender were the supreme pontiff; and, in order to defeat any plans which might be formed to nullify its proceedings, a law was established which declared that the council could not be dissolved, translated, or prorogued, by any person whatsoever, and the pope was again expressly named, without the consent or decree of the synod itself.

Eugenius, the reigning pontiff, was no sooner made acquainted with the temper of the council, than he resolved upon opposing its proceedings by the whole force of his authority and influence. He at once issued his mandate for its dissolution. The assembled prelates received the order with mingled indignation and contempt. In several of their subsequent sessions they proceeded to institute measures against him. A certain period was allowed for his appearance. This was lengthened, from time to time; and, at last, Eugenius found himself compelled to retract his order for the dissolution of the synod. His legates were now admitted, under certain restrictions, to take their proper place in the assembly. But fresh causes of dispute soon arose. The pope was resolved to transfer the council from Basil to Florence, or some other city more under his control. An embassy was daily expected from Greece; and while preparations were being made for its reception, Eugenius and his court were no less delighted than astonished to learn, that the Greek emperor himself intended to be present at the conference

which was to secure the reunion of the Eastern and Western churches.

The proceedings of the council at Basil became more and more offensive to the pontiff, as they referred more distinctly to the reforms deemed necessary to the safety of the church. Finding that his threats and persuasions were equally despised, he resolved on pursuing his own course. He accordingly summoned a synod at Ferrara. The cardinals and bishops who were attached to his interests, readily obeyed his wishes; but the members of the council of Basil continued to pursue their labours with uninterrupted diligence. They treated with open contempt the plans of Eugenius; taking no other notice of his conduct but to summon him before them, and to threaten him with the severest inflictions, if he refused to appear, or hesitated to sanction their decrees. The council which assembled at Ferrara, under the auspices of Eugenius, was subsequently transferred, first to Florence, and then to Rome. John Emmanuel Palæologus fulfilled his intention of seeking, by the medium of this synod, to reconcile his church to that of Rome, and so obtain for his empire the powerful aid of the Western princes.* All the old points of controversy were debated between the clergy on both sides. The procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son, as well as the Father, formed the most difficult subject of inquiry; and the emperor saw clearly that no union could ever be established if it were to depend upon the agreement of the theologians engaged in this dispute. At his earnest entreaty an attempt was

* Eugenius had provided for the safe voyage of the emperor, and received him at Ferrara, it is said, with the same honour as would have been shown him had he been emperor of the West.—*Le Vite de Pontifici del Platina*, p. 414.

made to discover some middle way of satisfying the consciences of the opposite parties. After many vain experiments, it was at length resolved, that a form of confession should be drawn up, explanatory of the views of both, but sufficiently indefinite to prevent an appearance of contradiction. The result of this effort was a creed, in which it was stated, "We, the Latins, on the one side, do affirm and make profession, that when we say the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, we intend not by this to deny that the Father is the principle and fountain of all the divinity of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, or that the Son proceeds from the Father, or to admit two principles, and two productions of the Holy Spirit; but we assert and believe, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, as one sole principle. And we, the Greeks, on the other side, do acknowledge, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and that He appertains to the Son; that He came forth from Him, and proceeds substantially from these two, namely, from the Father by the Son; and we are all united in this profession of faith.

Though difficulties were started by many of the clergy to the adoption of this formulary, it was at last admitted; two of the Greek bishops only, Mark of Ephesus, and Sophronius of Anchiala, positively refusing to acknowledge it.

The price which the Roman pontiff was to pay for this, and other concessions, on the part of the Eastern church, was stated in the following articles. First, that the pope should furnish the Greeks with the expenses of their journey; secondly, that he should yearly provide for the maintenance of three hundred soldiers, and two gallies, for the defence of Constantinople; thirdly, that the

gallies which conveyed pilgrims to Jerusalem should touch at the former city; fourthly, that if the emperor needed twenty gallies for six months, or for a year, the pope should furnish them; and, lastly, that if land forces were required, the pontiff should earnestly solicit the Christian princes of the West to raise them for the emperor's support.

This political part of the transaction adds little to the credit of those who were most anxious to accomplish the union. But only a small portion of the concessions required of the Greeks had as yet been made known. In an interview which several of their prelates had with the pope, he expressed the satisfaction which he felt at their agreement on the subject of the Holy Spirit; but, he added, that they must now proceed to consider other matters connected with the Eucharist, with the doctrine of purgatory, and of the Divine essence. Finally, he put into their hands a writing which contained the points to which he required their assent. On their opening this document, they found it stating authoritatively, 1. That the holy see, and the pope, as the vicar of Christ, should continue to enjoy their ancient privileges, and that the pope should be acknowledged to possess authority to make the additions to the creed above referred to. 2. That there are three classes of dying persons, that is, saints, sinners, and those who occupy an intermediate station, consisting, it was said, of such as had sinned and done penance, but had not perfected the required satisfactions. Of these three classes, the first were described as admitted at once to the beatific vision, and the second as plunged into eternal torments. But of the third, it was said, that they are subjected to the fire of purgatory, having been purified by which, they are admitted to the happiness of heaven.

The third article of this singular document purported, that either leavened or unleavened bread might be used in the Eucharist, provided it was made of corn, and consecrated by a priest, in a holy place; and in the fourth, it was ordered, that questions concerning the essence and operation of God, should be referred to the council. In answer to the pontiff's demand, that these points should be recognised as incorporated with the catholic creed, the Greek prelates had the good sense to reply, that they had no power from the emperor to adopt them, but that in their own name, and as individual bishops, they would declare their sentiments on the subject. With regard then to the first article, they firmly protested, that it was altogether unreasonable, that the pope should be acknowledged to possess the right of making additions to the creed, without previously consulting his brethren the patriarchs. The second and third points were passed over without controversy, and the fourth was referred implicitly to the decision of the council.

On the very night following the delivery of this document, the patriarch of Constantinople, a man enfeebled by years and sickness, breathed his last.* This event rendered both the emperor and the bishops anxious to conclude the discussion between them and the pope, and to return to Greece. After some further inquiry into the precise meaning of certain expressions employed on the one side and the other, a formulary was drawn up, entitled, "The Definition of the Holy Œcumenical Council,

* He made, it is said, a solemn declaration, before his death, of his assent to the doctrines of the Western church. "*Omnia igitur quæ sentit, et quæ dogmatizat catholica et apostolica ecclesia Domini Christi Jesu senioris Romæ, ipse quoque sentio.*"—Raynaldi *Annales Eccles.* t. xxviii. p. 289.

celebrated at Florence, under Eugenius, the servant of the servants of God, to serve for a perpetual monument, with the consent of our dear son, John Palæologus, the illustrious emperor of the Greeks; and of those who supply the place of our most venerable brethren the patriarchs, and of the other prelates, representing the Greek church."

Then follows a hymn of thanksgiving for the union of the two churches, and immediately after, a lengthened statement respecting the procession of the Holy Spirit, and of the manner in which the doctrine was to be received of all orthodox Christians. "Therefore," it was added,* "we determine, that this explication, *and of the Son*, was added lawfully and justly to the creed, to clear up the truth, and not without necessity." To this succeeds a summary of the other points in the creed, adopted as the basis of the union of the two churches; nor could we have a better guide to the current opinions of the age than that which is thus incidentally afforded us. "We declare it is said, that the body of Jesus Christ is truly consecrated in bread-corn, whether it be leavened or unleavened; and that the priest ought to make use of either the one, or the other, according to the practice of the church in which he ministers."

And further; "we define, that the souls of true penitents, dying in the love of God, before they have brought forth fruits worthy of repentance, are purified after their death by the pains of purgatory, and that they are delivered from these pains by the suffrages of the faithful, that is, by holy sacrifices, by prayers, alms, and other works of piety, which believers may perform for other believers,

* Raynaldi Annales Eccles. t. xxviii. p. 291

according to the orders of the church. We also determine, that the souls of those who have never sinned since their baptism, and of those who, having fallen into sin, have been purified while in the body, or after their departure, by the means above stated, enter immediately into heaven, and behold the Trinity, some more perfectly than others, according to the difference of their merits. So too we decide, that the souls of those who die in actual, mortal sin, or only in original sin, descend immediately into hell, to be there punished with torments, though not all with an equal degree of intensity. And further: we assert that the holy apostolic see, and the pope of Rome, have the supremacy over all the earth; that the pontiff is the successor of Saint Peter, the prince of the apostles, and the vicar of Jesus Christ; the head of the church, the father and teacher of all Christians; and that Jesus Christ hath given him, in the person of Saint Peter, the power to feed, to rule, and govern the catholic church, as it is set forth in the acts of Ecumenical councils, and in the sacred canons; renewing on the other hand, the rank and order of the holy patriarchs, appointed in the canons, so that he of Constantinople is next after the Roman pontiff, the patriarch of Alexandria taking the third place, the patriarch of Antioch the fourth, and the patriarch of Jerusalem the fifth."

The majority, of both parties, professed to be well satisfied with these arrangements; and as the most powerful men on each side were, from one cause or the other, deeply interested in accomplishing the union, apparent harmony prevailed throughout the council. A solemn religious service was performed on the day when the result of the deliberations was publicly announced. The pope, the emperor, and a large body of Greek and Latin

bishops were present on the occasion. Choristers of both the churches united in chanting hymns of thanksgiving. The cardinal Julian, and the archbishop of Nicaea, then ascended a pulpit, and read, the one in Latin, and the other in Greek, the definition of faith. At the conclusion, they demanded of the respective parties, whether they gave their assent to its adoption. A general and simultaneous answer was returned in the affirmative. The chiefs on each side then embraced each other, in token of their brotherly union and affection, and the business of the day was finished by a grand mass.

Skilfully, however, as the emperor had conducted this affair, as far as his own views were concerned, he found on his return to Constantinople, that the great body of the clergy in his dominions were as determined as ever to yield nothing to the demands of the Western church. Even those who signed the decree of union at Florence retracted their assent; and John Palæologus, who died in 1445, learnt how utterly vain it is for kings to attempt any grand religious design, if unguided by sound principles, or unaided by the cordial sympathy of good and faithful subjects.

The council of Basil was, in the meantime, prosecuting its labours with a steady determination to humble the pope, and render him subject to the general power of the church.* By a bold, but questionable act, it fulfilled its threats against Eugenius, by declaring him a disturber of the peace and unity of the faithful; unworthy of any title, honour, or dignity, and as, therefore, deposed from

* "This holy work," (the union,) says Muratori, "which ought to have calmed the seditious spirits of the few bishops then assembled at Basil, only served to exasperate them still more."—*Annali d'Italia*, t. ix. p. 179.

the pontificate. After a lapse of sixty days, the members of the council, which now consisted of thirty-nine prelates, and three hundred other ecclesiastics, proceeded to the nomination of those who were to be intrusted with the duty of electing a new pope. Eleven bishops, seven abbots, and fourteen doctors and beneficed clergymen, formed the conclave thus created. Their choice fell upon Amadeus, duke of Savoy, a man of remarkable piety, and who had retired from the world to spend the remainder of his days in a little hermitage, which he had made for himself on the banks of lake Leman. The desire only of usefulness could have induced such a man to accept the pontifical dignity, under circumstances so little encouraging. He allowed himself, however, to be drawn from his beloved retreat, and having assumed the title of Felix V., took an immediate part in the proceedings of the council of Basil.

Thus there were again two popes; and the Christian world was once more exposed to all the evils of schism. This state of things continued till the council of Basil gradually fell into insignificance, and held its forty-fifth and final session, in May, 1443. One source of agitation was thus removed. Eugenius* died about three years

* Muratori says of this pope, that, "after his return to Rome, he repaired the churches which were in ruins, maintained peace and justice, and had ever an open hand for the poor and distressed. He was a pontiff of rare qualities; and though in some degree unfortunate, both in spiritual and temporal affairs, many great objects were accomplished during his reign."—*Annali d'Italia*, t. ix. p. 416. This is a very different judgment to that passed on him in the council of Basil. Platina remarks that, "he erred at the beginning of his pontificate by hearkening to bad advice; but that when he returned unto himself, he exhibited the most valuable qualities."—*Le Vite de Pontifici*, p. 421. Venet. 1715.

after; and Felix, heartily weary of his dignity, was easily persuaded to abdicate, and thus leave the pontificate to be enjoyed by Nicolas V., without any rival pretender to its possession.

The new pontiff was a man of amiable temper and considerable talent. He loved peace, and cherished learning.* To his zeal and liberality, the world was indebted for the preservation of many valuable manuscripts of the Greek and Latin fathers; and a well-disposed mind will be impressed with a feeling of deep regret, whenever other associations tend to diminish its freedom to render honour to men so well deserving of respect as Nicolas V. His early years were spent in the diligent cultivation of his mind. He perused, with the genuine devotion of a scholar, the noblest productions of antiquity; and the fruits of his labours obtained for him the friendship of those who were best able to appreciate his ability. Thus he was said to be deserving of admiration, not only for his knowledge, for his skill in philosophical and theological sciences, but for the virtues which properly pertain to such pursuits. There were few writings, it is added, either in Greek or Latin, with which he was not acquainted. The Bible was especially familiar to him. In short, says the contemporary witness to his merit, his genius was sanctified, and his memory was sanctified.* A controversy, which threatened both parties with distressing results, had arisen between the Roman court and the church in Germany. Nicolas employed his best exertions to remove the causes of dispute. But he could not emancipate himself from the thralldom in which he was placed by the very position which

* Tiraboschi Storia della Letter. Ital. t. vi. par. i. p. 63.

he occupied. His representatives pleaded more for the rights of the pontificate, than for those of the universal church. The consequence was, that nothing effectual was done for the settlement of the dispute. But in the meantime intelligence reached this right-minded and earnest man, that Constantinople, the capital of Christendom in the East, had fallen into the hands of the Turks. No better proof could be given of his really catholic spirit, than that, when he received the news, he exhibited all the signs of a broken-heart, and soon after expired.

Nicolas was succeeded by Alphonsus Borgia, a Spanish cardinal; a man far advanced in age, but characterized by a disposition the most resolute and ambitious. He enjoyed his dignity little more than three years, and during the whole time was occupied in vain endeavours to form an armament for the recovery of the Eastern empire from the grasp of the victorious Turks. His successor, Pius II., the famous Æneas Silvius Piccolomini, known throughout the world for his learning and eloquence, had been engaged in public affairs from his earliest years. Like most of the bolder spirits of the age, he soon became involved in party conflicts. Circumstances rendered him the ally of one of the cardinals, most earnestly devoted to the council of Basil. His vast acquirements and abilities recommended him to the important office of secretary to the assembly; and whenever any weighty affair was to be transacted with foreign princes and potentates, it was Æneas Silvius to whom the conduct of the embassy was committed.* In the course of these diplomatic employments, he visited most of the European courts, among which were those of Scot-

* Platina *Le Vite de Pontifici*, p. 439.

land and Great Britain,* His connexion with the council of Basil embroiled him with the reigning pope; and any ordinary man would have probably ruined for ever his interests at the papal court, by expressing the sentiments which Æneas published in his writings. But he found the means of reconciling himself to Eugenius. Both that pontiff and his successor treated the accomplished orator with as much affection as if he had never been guilty of any disloyalty to the papacy. He was sent by them to various courts; and his profound experience in the arts of diplomacy enabled him to shake even the obstinate determination of the Germans to uphold the decrees of the council of Basil, in defiance of the Roman hierarchy. They had formally adopted these decrees in a diet held at Mentz in the year 1439, under the emperor Albert II.† The resolution which thus gave legitimacy to the acts of a synod, which openly professed to transfer the power of the church from the popes, to a representative body, might have been regarded as the commencement of a radical change in the religious state of Germany. But Albert's successor, Frederic III., was ill prepared to execute a design which it required equal ability and courage to accomplish. Æneas Silvius, who in the course of his eventful career had been admitted into the emperor's confidence as his secretary, employed the whole force of his persuasion to induce him to submit himself, and the church of Germany, to the papal rule. A synod was held at Aschaffenburg, in 1447, and another at Vienna, the following year, when a concordat was agreed upon, the main articles of which were destructive of the liberties of the national church.

* Tiraboschi Storia della Letter. Ital. t. vi. p. 667.

† Kohlrausch, c. xiv. sec. i.

The attention of the European powers was now almost entirely engrossed by the advances of the Turks. Noble efforts were made by the Roman pontiffs to oppose the common enemy. They employed their wealth in fitting out armaments, while monarchs seemed to grudge the smallest sacrifice to defend the boundary lines of Christendom. The fortress of Bulgrade, besieged by the Sultan, at the head of 160,000 men, was only delivered by the enthusiasm of a rude multitude, who, emulating the earlier crusaders, performed a service for the world and for religion, never recognised with the gratitude which it ought to have inspired.

Amid all the changes and exciting events which had taken place, no real improvement was effected in the dispositions of the ruling members of the church. A melancholy proof was given of this fact by the elevation of Roderic Borgia to the pontifical throne. There is not a writer, it has been remarked, not even among those whose province it seems to be to defend the princes of the church, who has not deplored the accession of this wretched man to the papal dignity. Nothing but the most infamous disregard for religion on the part of the higher clergy, could have allowed them to exalt him to such a station. But he bribed their avarice, and flattered their ambition; and when once the heads of a church have ceased to regard their honour and happiness as identified with its spiritual interests, it matters little with them whether the vices of those with whom they are associated be more or less flagrant, if they can but increase their own wealth and power.

Alexander VI., as the new pontiff was
 A. D. called, occupied the throne from 1492 to
 1492—1503. 1503. During that period he committed

the most flagitious crimes. The earlier part of his career had been distinguished by gross licentiousness; and he now sought by acts of daring tyranny to endow his family with the rank and fortune of princes. His favourite son, Cæsar Borgia, who was already a cardinal, emulated him in all his vices, and became a scourge to the whole country about Rome. Lucretia, his daughter, was married and divorced four several times, in order to gratify her own and her father's inordinate ambition. Charles VIII. of France, who both feared and hated him, successfully defeated his intrigues, and by his victories long kept him in a state of alarm. But the successor of that monarch, Louis XII., was less capable of resisting his designs; and, to purchase his favour, he made Cæsar Borgia duke of Valentinois, and promised to aid him with an army to gain possession of Romagna. The magnificence and luxury of the new duke far exceeded his revenues, or those of the papacy. Extraordinary means, therefore, had to be employed, to furnish the necessary funds; and the common report of history is, that many a wealthy cardinal, whose fortune at his death would become the inheritance of the pope, perished by poison, or by the hand of the assassin.

While the eyes of the world were fixed with silent scorn upon these infamous proceedings, there was one man bold enough to denounce the culprits in the language of indignant justice. This was Jerome Savonarola, who, after having received his education in the Dominican convent at Bologna, took up his residence at Florence, where he was favourably received by the powerful and accomplished Lorenzo de Medici. The earnest perusal of the old fathers of the church, combined with a still profounder study of the Scriptures, afforded him a view

of Christianity, in its genuine and original character, which excited the most passionate desire in his soul to bring all around him to receive it in the same pure and uncorrupted form. He became a preacher. His fervent eloquence, his ingenuous and devout appeals to the divine word, and the masterly use which he made, even in popular assemblies, of his early scholastic reading, all contributed to render his sermons irresistibly powerful; and he produced an impression on the minds of the Florentines, which seemed the forerunner of the most important changes.

In those times, and in a city like Florence, it was almost impossible for such a man as Savonarola to acquire an influence in the republic, and not interfere with its politics. The eloquent Dominican was soon called upon to give his counsel on matters of public concern. He dreaded the growing power of the Medici. He saw how soon the dearest rights of the citizens would be sacrificed to the grandeur of a single family, if it were not at once resisted. These fears led him to mingle his hitherto purely religious views with those of a political reformer. A new class of enemies was thus raised against him, and his path became so much the more difficult and dangerous. Those who hated him for the severity with which he reproached the vices of the world, had now a pretext for desiring his ruin, which they dare not avow themselves to wish, so long as he was the simple advocate of truth and virtue.*

* No better illustration could be given of the false, and utterly inadequate view of religious characters afforded by merely literary writers, than the account which the elegant author of the *Life of Lorenzo de Medici* has given of Savonarola. "The haughty and enthusiastic Savonarola," says Mr. Roscoe, speaking of Lorenzo's

But it was against the corruptions of the Roman court, that Savonarola levelled his keenest darts. Alexander even trembled at the reports which reached him of the success of the preacher. It is said that he sent him a secret intimation, that a cardinal's hat should be the reward of his future silence; and Savonarola is said to have answered, that he would rather wear the red hat of martyrdom, than that of the cardinal. Political tumults now increased every day. The preacher assumed the air of a prophet, and spoke from the Apocalypse of times when freedom and truth should hold their simultaneous reign upon the earth. His enthusiasm appears, at this period of his course, to have carried him far beyond the line of simple duty. He appealed rather to the visible judgments of heaven, than to the plain word of God. Urged onward by his fervent imagination, he consented to accept the challenge of a Franciscan, and to put the truth of his doctrine to the test of an ordeal by fire. A Dominican, devoted to his cause, insisted upon undergoing the fearful trial in his stead. Such was the marvellous character of the age, that the Florentine magistrates permitted a burning pile to be prepared, and the two monks placed themselves in an attitude as ready

death-bed. "thought probably that in the last moments of agitation and suffering, he might be able to collect materials for his factious purposes." And then this really otherwise enlightened writer tells us, that Savonarola exhorted the dying man to repentance, to forgive his enemies, and to repair any injuries which he might have committed; all which is attributed to Savonarola's desire to collect materials for factious purposes. Mr. Roscoe knew as much of Savonarola as Mr. Hallam knows of Luther. Both the one and the other, though excellent and accomplished men, exhibiting profound ignorance when making any attempt to account for religious phenomena, or describing religious character

to rush into the flames. But at this moment, Savonarola stepped forward, and insisted, that his friend should be allowed to bear the sacramental elements in his hand. His enemies set up a cry of horror at the proposal. "Will he consume," they exclaimed, "the body of the blessed Jesus in the flames? • Will he expose the Lord, for whom he has pretended such love, to an indignity like this?"

It only required a skilful management of the feeling thus excited among the multitude, to destroy Savonarola. He was soon after apprehended. The anathemas directed against him by the pope were repeated. Accused of heresy and blasphemy, he was put to the torture. Means the most barbarous were employed to increase his agony. "It is enough," he exclaimed. "Now, O Lord, take my soul!" Having been loosed from the rack, he prayed that those who had tortured him might be forgiven. He was then led, with two of his associates, to the place of execution; and being first strangled, was afterwards committed to the flames.

The blessings which Savonarola might have conferred upon mankind were thus, in great measure, sacrificed to the part which he took in the affairs of Florence, and to the errors which had their origin in his overwrought feelings. Had he continued on the course upon which he set out, the Reformation might have been commenced twenty years before it was, and its birth-place would have been Italy, instead of Germany. But Savonarola wanted the grand characteristics of Luther's mind: firmness and sobriety, and a studious desire to change nothing, which the word of God, and the evident interests of religion, did not regard as hostile.

Alexander V. had freed himself of a dreaded foe by the execution of the Florentine preacher. But the mea-

sure of his guilt was soon to be full. Cæsar Borgia found his resources wholly exhausted. Fired by a demoniacal spirit, he resolved upon a desperate expedient to replenish his coffers. The cardinal Cornetto was one of the richest men in Rome. He resolved to murder him, and with him two or three others reputed to possess almost equal wealth. The wretched pontiff is uniformly represented as so blindly fond of his offspring, that more than half his crimes were committed to gratify their passions. Cæsar obtained his consent to the plan which he had formed. The doomed cardinals were invited to a splendid supper, which Alexander proposed to give at Cornetto's own villa. Before leaving the Vatican, he dispatched one of his attendants with some bottles of rare wine for the entertainment, but which the domestics were strictly charged to pour out for none, but the especially honoured among the guests. Alexander and his son then set out for the villa. They arrived, anxious and heated, and immediately called for wine. Either from haste, or design, the servant in attendance neglected the order which had been given respecting the precious wine to be kept in reserve. Goblets of it were immediately presented to Alexander and his son. The former, who was little accustomed to temper his draughts with water, eagerly swallowed the beverage. Cæsar Borgia drank a more diluted portion. A few minutes only had passed, when the pope fell into violent convulsions. His son was similarly attacked, but less terribly. The fearful secret became manifest to the astonished company. Antidotes were applied; but Alexander died in the course of the night, and Cæsar Borgia was only recovered, after ten months of suffering, to endure the disgrace and infamy which he so richly deserved.

The event here described occurred in the year 1503. Pius III. enjoyed the papal dignity only a month, and was succeeded by Julius II., a man whose fierce ambition and love of war threatened to involve all Europe in hostilities. The affairs of religion seemed in danger of being forgotten during the turbulent period of his pontificate, till, at length, the emperor Maximilian, and Louis XII. of France, united together in encouraging the assembly of a council at Pisa. Three of the cardinals joined with them in this salutary project, insisting only on these conditions; first, that the emperor and the king should engage to protect and defend the council, and all who should take part in its proceedings, as long as it continued its sessions: secondly; not to consent to its dissolution, or translation, except with the approbation of the majority of its members: and, thirdly; to make the council free and safe, and observe the rules prescribed by that of Constance. These conditions being accepted by the two sovereigns, the cardinals obtained the aid of several of their brethren, and the synod was summoned to meet on the first of September, 1511. Alarmed at this proceeding, Julius called another council, and directed it to assemble in the palace of the Lateran the following year.

Notwithstanding the opposition of the pontiff, the council held its first session at Pisa, in the month of November; and though little was done towards the reformation of the church, "in its head and members," as was proposed, a new conformation was given to the all-important decree passed at Constance, that the authority of general councils is superior to that of the pope. Julius having been summoned to attend, and not appearing, the assembly proceeded to put in execution the law which it

had thus established. In its eighth session, it declared Julius "a notorious disturber, contumacious, the author of schism, incorrigible, and hardened; and, therefore, amenable to the penalties ordered to be inflicted by the holy decrees of the councils of Constance and Basil." Agreeably to this sentence, Julius was suspended from the administration of the papacy; and all bishops, clergymen, and Christians of every degree, were forbidden to obey him.

Political affairs compelled the speedy removal of the council from Pisa to Lyons, where it soon ceased to retain any appearance of a body invested with legitimate authority. The council, which Julius had summoned to meet in the Lateran, passed several decrees, with a pretended zeal for reform, but evidently with no actual intention to correct those disorders which had their birth in the vicious state of the papal court and government. Julius died while plotting new wars; and his successor, Leo X., only began his reign to witness the commencement of a movement which at once put an end to the question, whether the world would allow the church to wait for reform till it was permitted by popes, princes, or councils.

The state of religion at the accession of Leo X. presented many phenomena. Daring as were the claims of the pontiffs, they were not more so than the manner in which they were often met. Within the course of a single century, sentence had been pronounced on several successive pontiffs. They were assailed in the schools of universities; their supremacy and rights were made a common subject of discussion; and no monarch ever allowed his power to be attacked by the pope, without, sooner or later, inflicting twofold punishment upon the

assailant. Formal measures were adopted for the abridgment of their authority. In the latter part of the thirteenth century, Louis IX. of France, by means of the Pragmatic Sanction, rendered the church of France essentially free from the worst usurpations of the popes. But in the year 1438, and while the council of Basil was sitting, Charles VII. assembled the clergy of his kingdom in a general synod at Bourges. There the Pragmatic Sanction was adopted in a still more definite form; and it is a circumstance of deep interest to the inquirer into the character of these times, that, while the court of Rome was making such extravagant demands, and asserting such a tyrannous authority over all persons and causes ecclesiastical, there was, at least, one national church, which dare assert its ancient rights and independence.

It was a known fact that, in former times, the bishops owed their election to the united suffrages of the clergy and people. With the increase of monarchical power, new customs were introduced, and the consent of the king became essential to the validity of the election. The authority given to the monarch, in the appointment of the higher clergy, did not stop here; but the consequence of this transfer of the election of bishops from the church to the court, was soon felt even by the princes who had most desired to effect it. They were unable to resist the usurpations of the pope; and after a brief period the power which they had coveted was substantially in the hands of the Roman pontiff. It was the object of the Pragmatic Sanction to recover the rights which had thus been lost to the monarch and to the national church. By its provisions, the popes were deprived of the patronage of ecclesiastical benefices in France, and of authority to determine law-suits arising

from matters of religious dispute. Annates, as demanded by the pope, the first year's income, that is, of vacant benefices, were abolished by a similar decree.

The parliament of Paris afforded a striking proof of its willingness to aid the design contemplated by the Pragmatic Sanction. In the year 1445, the bishop of Nantes appealed from an ordinance of the king to the papal court. The parliament immediately passed a decree, which directed that the temporalities of the bishop should be seized, as forfeited by the prelate's violation of a fundamental law of the kingdom, and of the privileges of the Gallican church.*

Such was the contrast exhibited between the daring ambition of the popes, and the feeling entertained respecting their rights in France, and other European states. It is evident, that no greater disposition existed to acknowledge their claims to infallibility. The councils of the fifteenth century plainly refused to recognise such a notion as their freedom from error. Discussions took place in the universities, which implied as strong a feeling of the liberty of thought and inquiry, as could be cherished in the most enlightened times. This, indeed, is one of the other phenomena of the period. While ignorance prevailed to the most melancholy extent over a large portion of the world; while superstition in all its forms preyed on men's hearts and souls, proofs of extraordinary intellectual vigour were exhibited in the great schools of learning, and France, Italy, and England vied

* The Pragmatic Sanction was almost annulled by the policy of Pius II.; but it was not till the reign of Francis I. that it ceased to form a part of the laws of France. It was then set aside to make room for the celebrated concordate entered into between Francis and Leo X., in 1517.

with each other in the cultivation of literature and philosophy.

With such elements of opposition between the papal system and the polity of states, with their several independent churches, it is wonderful that so many ages passed away before the conflict became definite and general. But this will be sufficiently accounted for, if we recollect, in how many various ways the interests of the higher order of clergy were connected with the existing state of the church. The Roman pontiff possessed the still unquestioned right to bestow the greatest of ecclesiastical dignities upon those who obtained his favour. A vast number of the claims made by the bishops in all countries were known to depend upon pretensions which would as little endure strict examination as those of the pope himself. Though circumstances therefore might arise, which were calculated either to provoke, or encourage opposition, their influence was only partial. Personal disappointment, on the one side, or the hopes fostered by royal favour, on the other, might give spirit to a little body of prelates assembled in a council, or a national synod; but, the season of excitement passed, the mass of the clergy would easily fall back into a state of indifference, a state usually supposed to be least pregnant with danger to their interests.

To those who lived at this period, and were capable of contemplating the scene around them with a calm and intelligent mind, the reasons for encouraging or suppressing hope, must have been almost equally balanced. Here and there an effort had been made to introduce reform. In England, the fruits of Wicliffe's labours were still to be seen, but the seed which he had sown, had been early and plentifully watered with the blood of

martyrs; and who could tell whether another generation of saints would be raised up again to water it with dew so precious and so vitalizing?

A movement had taken place in Bohemia, which at one time promised some great result. The doctrines of Huss and Jerome of Prague, were adopted by vast numbers of the people. They were headed by men of courage and ability, and the resolution with which they pursued their course, defied and daunted their opponents. Desiring to make their real opinions and wishes known, they appealed to the council of Basil, and were permitted by that assembly to send deputies from the several parties into which they were now divided. Of these parties the most important were the Calixtines, so called from their demanding the cup for the laity; and the Taborites, a name which they derived from their having fixed their stronghold on a mountain, which they loved thus to designate. The main characteristic of the latter, was their denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and other points peculiar to the existing systems of church theology. They had increased to a powerful body, and more frequently presented the appearance of an army, than of a religious sect. Led by a blind chieftain, the heroic Zisca, they defied the forces of the emperor, and sustained their position with as much skill as if they had been only trained to war.

It was sound policy, therefore, which dictated the admission of their representatives to the council of Basil. The entrance of these Bohemian deputies into that city, produced the greatest excitement.* People of all classes flocked to behold the men who had taken a part in such

* L'Enfant Histoire de la Guerre des Hussites, t. ii. c. xviii: p. i:

deeds of daring as had distinguished the followers of Zisca. To the credit of the better feeling existing in the council, they were treated in a manner very different from that experienced by the martyred founders of their party. The demands which they made were comprised under four heads; and it is interesting, in an age like the present, to see for what principles, founded in common sense and justice, good and brave men had, in former times, to shed their blood, and risk everything that was dear to their hearts. Thus they required, first, "That the Eucharist should be administered to the laity in both kinds; secondly, that the word of God might be freely preached; thirdly, that ecclesiastics should no longer enjoy the immense revenues which they had hitherto possessed; and, lastly, that public crimes should be punished by the magistrate."

In answer to an exhortation addressed to them by one of the fathers of the council, they solemnly affirmed, that they desired nothing more than peace; that they had never despised the church, or its synods, but that they had been unjustly condemned at the council of Constance; and now maintained only what was founded upon the gospel.

Although preserved from insult, or injury, the Bohemian representatives failed to convince the council of their right to follow the dictates of their consciences and of Scripture. They returned to their country little satisfied with the result of their mission, but certainly with more reason than ever to contend for Christian liberty, and to oppose the system of ecclesiastical rule, under which error and injustice had acquired such gigantic strength. In the year 1443, in a synod held at Kuttenberg, the Taborites made a distinct profession of their

faith. "We believe," they said, "with our hearts, and confess with our mouths, before God and man, and in respect to all who may read this our confession, or may hear it read, that in the holy supper, as appears from the word of God, and the writings of the doctors of the primitive church, there are two things, the one heavenly, and the other earthly. The heavenly is the body of Christ, and the blood which he shed for our redemption, and gives for the spiritual drink of his church. And this it is which is marked by his words, 'Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you;' and, 'Drink ye all of this: for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins.'*" It is for this reason that we detest, and publicly contradict the horrible error of transubstantiation."†

But, with all the zeal, courage, and devotion which these Bohemians possessed, their cause declined. One of their most eminent teachers, in writing to a friend in some distant part of the country, said, "Arm yourself with patience. Be constant in prayer, and have good hope. The aid of God will come when we least expect it. Our enterprises have ended badly, because they were badly begun."‡ This is sufficient to show, how much the party had suffered from the fatal error so often committed by religious reformers; from confounding, that is, the objects which belong only to the circle of spiritual, or ecclesiastical interests, with those which are common to every state of social and political existence. The Bohe-

* St. Matthew, xxvi. 26—28.

† L'Enfant Histoire de la Guerre des Hussites, t. ii. c. xxi. p. 142.

‡ Letter written by Biscupeck, principal Taborite priest. L'Enfant, t. ii. c. xxi. p. 150.

mians, in this respect, were guilty of the same folly as Savonarola at Florence; and as the French Protestants in the age succeeding that of the Reformation. Men must contend altogether with spiritual weapons, if they enter upon a spiritual warfare. As soon as they have recourse to the instruments of a carnal strength, they are guilty, practically, of disbelief. "Put up thy sword," was the command addressed by Christ to his apostle; and it has never been reversed, or modified.

The Calixtines and Taborites gradually yielded to the power by which they were on all sides assailed. They, at length, saw the necessity of confining themselves to the proper objects of a religious body. Subjecting their principles to a severe review, they wisely determined not to admit into communion those whose wild and visionary notions had brought such discredit on their party, and so materially injured, in injuring them, the cause of evangelical truth. The Calixtines were content to accept the imperfect licence given them by the council of Basil, to allow the cup to the laity in the administration of the Lord's supper. From thenceforth they became separate from their brethren the Taborites. The subtle Æneas Silvius at once saw the advantage which the church had thus gained: and the ordinary maxims of ecclesiastical policy, had only to be applied with caution, to render the one sect of Bohemian reformers the fiercest of all foes to the other. Sanguinary encounters took place between the two parties. Wearied with this state of things, though not disheartened, the best of the Taborites put in practice the lessons which they had learnt in the time of affliction. Though few in number, when separated from their weak and faithless associates, they were sufficient to form a society, which, under the name of the United

Brethren, became, in after years, a powerful ally of the German reformers; and, still more conspicuously, a glorious nursery of devout spirits, destined to carry the light of the gospel to the remotest and most desolate lands.

But whatever the subsequent results, of these events, their immediate consequences could only tend to discourage an ardent mind, anxious to see truth and righteousness triumphing over their enemies. So far, indeed, as positive observation was concerned, the prospects of those who earnestly sighed for the progress of the gospel were dark and unpromising. But when attention was turned from that which immediately presented itself to notice, and became fixed on that which lay more remote, new feelings must have been excited in the heart. There was evidently a breath passing over the dry bones; a still small voice for the soul of the devout observer of events. Inquiries had been instituted which the proudest potentates on earth could not treat with contempt; questions had been asked which, sooner or later, must receive their answer from the first of bishops, and the greatest of kings. There was a discoverable movement in the soul of the world itself, which predicted the approaching struggle between truth and error; between the prime maxims of divine holiness, and those which a vain notion of necessity, or expediency, had substituted in their place.

It was plainly impossible that so much learning should exist, and that it should be continually increasing, and still leave mankind in ignorance as to those subjects with which, of all others, it is most essential to their happiness that they should become familiar. Knowledge is power, not in regard to temporal matters only, but even still more so in reference to those which are spiritual and eternal. While it was evident, therefore, that

the reign of darkness and ignorance was fast drawing to a close, the religious observer had sufficient to encourage him in the conviction, that Divine Providence would not leave mankind much longer under the degrading yoke to which they had subjected themselves by their vices and their sloth. There were teachers, who, following the footsteps of Wicliffe, and others of like spirit, positively announced the saving doctrines of the gospel; and there were others, who, though they saw not so clearly the truth, yet, feeling it in their hearts, which are often prophetic when the intellect is not, made it known by their evangelical virtues. A moderate degree of attention to the signs thus given, and the lessons thus taught, would be sufficient, in any age, to convince ingenuous and pious minds, that the Lord will never forsake the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, or even the two or three who meet together in his name.

We have traced the course of events up to that period, when the renovating influences of inquiry, and the devotion of earnest minds, were to give a new character to ecclesiastical politics, and wholly to change the relations which the several members of the one universal church bore to each other. It was not necessary that the correction of abuses, however deeply they had been engrafted on forms of belief, or systems of government, should be attended by the disruption of Christian communities. That the Reformation was followed by schism, though it should be viewed as affecting only the visible branches of the church, is deeply to be deplored. The history of the times succeeding the memorable era when God made the voice of the gospel heard above the clamour of human tongues, is well worthy of study. But it is separated by a strongly-marked line from that of the

earlier ages. Even the nominal unity of the church affords considerable help to the inquirer, as he endeavours to realize the idea of its spiritual catholicity and oneness. This aid is wanting to the reader when he enters upon the later annals of Christianity; and it may, perhaps, be not altogether unprofitable to suggest, that the clearer the understanding of the distinction which exists between the two eras, the better will the student be able to discover the power of God working effectually in both.

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